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JAN 1954 24

D R A M A T I C S

An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

Vol. XXV, No. 4

JANUARY, 1954

50c Per Copy

THE PLAY'S THE THING

By ROSE G. SMITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL DRAMA IN SWITZERLAND

By GERALD TYLER

RENA STAGING: SCENERY, PROPERTIES, SOUND

By TED SKINNER

I MAKE-UP

DORIS MARSOLAIS MARSHALL

SILVER ANNIVERSARY REGIONAL CONFERENCES

HAPPY NEW YEAR



in Terres as Mr. Darcey
Laurie Townsend as
Elizabeth in *Pride and
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(DRAMATICS is published by The National Thespians Society, an organization of teachers and students devoted to the advancement of dramatic arts in the secondary schools)

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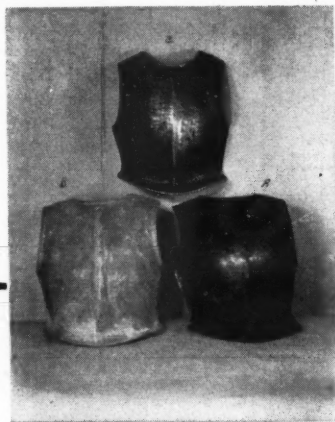
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The roller-coaster ride has been too much for Margy. Pat brings her home.

STORY

The Frake family takes off for the State Fair, with Margy heading for the roller coasters, Wayne for the Hoopla stands, and Mother and Dad bringing up the rear with their entries for prizes: home made pickles, and the hog, Blue Boy. Both Margy and Wayne are romantically interested at home — in Harry and Eleanor. But they are ready for a State Fair fling, and Margy meets Pat, a columnist, and Wayne meets Emily, who attends fairs with her father. As the week passes, Mother's pickles and Blue Boy's sweepstakes become as important, almost, to Pat and Emily as to the Frakes themselves, and the pickles begin to get surprising publicity, and Blue Boy's fame grows to tremendous proportions. The older Frakes do not suspect Pat's hand in this, for they do not know what his profession is. With the approaching end of State Fair, Margy faces a heart-touching dilemma. She must make a choice that will affect her whole life, and someone will be hurt however she decides. It's a real play of youth, with its fun and heartaches, laughter and drama, and young groups will love it.

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Virtue triumphs in an exciting moment.

If a bank robber locked up your high school principal and then impersonated him there'd be some changes made — especially if the robber had some startling ideas on how a school should be run!

BOOKS and CROOKS

A 3-act farce by Newt Mitzman and William Datzell; 6m, 5w, with one male role doubled; extras as desired. Time, full evening. Scene, 1 int.

STORY

Principal Henly was really a right guy but you'd never guess it to hear him cracking down on a student for a minor breach of rules or yelling at his nervous secretary. In fact he's got her so flustered that she's mistaking her own typewriter bell for the phone bell and standing poised on one foot — not sure whether to finish bringing him the glass of water for his vitamin pill, or drop the glass and obey Order No. 2, to ring the school bell. And then a pair of crooks hide out in the school. They're certainly short on character, but they're good-natured enough (when they're not pointing a gun at someone). One of them finds that in looks he's a dead ringer for Principal Henly and he realizes that their only chance of escaping the police is to double for him. Hence, they truss up Principal Henly, roll him into a closet and start running the school. They spend funds liberally: Ask for anything and they grant it. And in a scene full of comedy,

they even discuss the problem of catching the criminals with the banker and the police. In addition there's a charming high school romance; the problem of choosing a Prom Queen and all the other lively events of high school life. There's a great scene when one of the culprit students, demonstrating what he'd do to the Principal: "Bounce him against this wall, flip him over his desk, tie him into a pretzel and throw him in the closet" — comes on the real principal already in a closet after having suffered just about that treatment. In a grand finale, Principal Henly shows what a good scout he really is and the high school is all set for happier days ahead.

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TITLES

Blue Stocking

Conrad Richter's Pulitzer Award novel is the source of this splendid contest play. It is a deeply American comedy of the conflict between the adventurous pioneer and the stay-at-home conservatives. Cast, 2m, 5w.

The Leader of the People

John Steinbeck's masterpiece of characterization offers the actor a splendid opportunity. The play is about "Grandfather" who long ago led the people across the plains. Now he tries to relive that past in spite of the irritation of his modern relatives. Cast, 3m, 2w, and a boy.

The Plum Tree

Mary Ellen Chase's beloved story, The Plum Tree, is the basis of this tense play of character. In the tranquil setting of a tea party we touch hands with tragedy. A play of extraordinary power and understanding. Cast, 7w.

I'm a Fool

Sherwood Anderson's best-loved story is offered here as a delightful play. It concerns the tragic-comic predicament of a boy who bragged too much at the wrong time. A version of this story has been done on radio by Orson Welles. Cast, 4m, 4w.

Seeds of Suspicion

Dorothy L. Sayers' exciting mystery "Suspicion" has been made into a fine one-act play. A hint of suspicion at the beginning builds to almost unbearable tension and then an unexpected reversal at the end. This is perhaps Dorothy L. Sayers' most exciting mystery. Cast, 4m, 4w.

The Roman Kid

Paul Gallico's enchanting story is most effective when staged with a simple curtain backdrop. The plot combines a young American sports writer, modern Rome and the daughter of an archeologist. Cast, 4m, 2w.

Mooncalf Mugford

Winner of the Western Speech Association contest for original plays, this drama is indeed unique. A devoted wife, exhausted by her care of her unbalanced husband loses her own grip on sanity and comes to join him in his world of imaginary terror and beauty. Cast, 2m, 3w. Royalty, \$5.00.

Opening Night

Laugh again with Cornelia Otis Skinner! She's cold and trembling with stage fright as she prepares for a Broadway opening and her friends and family almost propel her into a nervous breakdown in their eager desire to "help." Cast, 1m, 10w.

The Lottery

Christopher Morley said of the story, "I implore you not to read this story unless you can take a day or a week afterward to think about it." It has become a classic of horror! Like the story, the play starts almost gaily and builds swiftly to a climax of stark terror. Even inexperienced groups may achieve a powerful success with this play. Cast, 8m, 5w.

Love and Alexander Botts

As his thousands of Saturday Evening Post fans know, there's no one like Alexander Botts, whether he's selling an Earthworm Tractor or solving a personal problem. Here Botts decides to straighten out a disaster-bound romance. The various results make this one of the most humorous comedies we've seen. Cast, 4m, 2w. Royalty, \$5.00.

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A new book by Neill C. Wilson

BASHFUL PREACHER. 10 min. The young preacher comes to Cat Track Hollow to hold meetings and do the marrying. Because of shyness, he almost loses the girl he wants for himself. Several characters. Plenty of humor. **60c**

FRAWGS OR STARS? 10 min. Tells of the experience of one bride as she sets out to get her man. Here is real humor. Just two characters, a man and a woman, who later become lovers. **60c**

GRANNY BUYS A TRUCK. 10 min. The way Granny transforms a family who have lost their "git up and gimp" brings delight to all of Cat Track Hollow, as it will to any audience who is lucky enough to hear the account of it. Several characters. **60c**

GRANNY HITE VS. THE UNITED STATES. 10 min. Granny goes to Washington to save Cat Track Hollow from the intrusion of a three-lane highway. She makes her way into the Halls of Justice and sets the Supreme Court in an uproar. Several characters. **60c**

OTHER NEW LISTINGS

BABIES. Mark Twain. 6 min. From a banquet speech by the author. Funny. **40c**

BUD'S FAIRY TALE. James Whitcomb Riley. 8 min. Little boy tells of the fairy, Squidicum, who comes and takes him to the fairy teaparty. Then says: "No, I ain't ben asleep an' dream it all like you think." **50c**

CAROLYN'S PLEASANT JAUNT. Monolog. 6 min. A gay, young girl talks as she rides in a smart, new convertible, urging the boy friend to drive faster and faster. She concludes her monolog in the ditch. The humor and moral are both good. **50c**

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH. Baumbach. From the fantasy. Especially good for wedding anniversaries and for interpretative reading. **60c**

MOON BEAMS. Sheffield. 5 min. Monolog. A boy's dream of flying in a space ship. **50c**

TALL TALES. Mark Twain. 10 min. From "Roughing It." These tales put Paul Bunyon to shame. **50c**

IN SCANDINAVIAN DIALECT

DEY WOULDN'T GOSSIP. Ardis Holmen. 10 min. Two women. Full of "yuicy" gossip and comedy. **60c**

GETTING VILLY OOP. 8 min. Humorous account of a mother calling her boy in the morning. **40c**

YOOST A FEW VORDS. Ardis Holmen. 8 min. Monolog. Woman orders groceries — but her "few vords," are so many that the grocer almost hangs up. Probably the funniest of all of the Scandinavian dialect readings. **60c**

YUNIOR AT THE SHOE STORE. 7 min. Those who have liked "Yunior Has a Yolly Time," will be delighted with this new monolog. **50c**

These, and many other new readings are listed in our 1954 catalog of Readings, Plays and Entertainments.

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In this Issue

"PLAY acting is so much a part of the school life that it is almost impossible for a child to go through the school without taking part in a play; in fact in some places it is a rule that every boy or girl must have taken a part in a school play by the time he or she is seventeen years old." Not in America will you find this quotation true, but in Switzerland! Gerald Tyler of Brighthouse, England, takes us this month to a land famous for its Swiss cheese, its Alps and its watches. After reading this article, every drama teacher will conclude that Switzerland is a theatre Utopia.

TED SKINNER of Texas College of Arts and Industry, Kingsville, presents in his fourth article on arena staging the "do's and don'ts" about scenery, properties and sound. I particularly like the following quotation: "Instead of the absence of the fourth wall, there is an absence of the four walls; instead of the illusion of the fourth wall, there is the illusion of the four walls." Heed well his words!

OUR hero and his dog Shep meanders into the make-up class to learn the art of making-up for the plays. He learns about beards, wigs and mustaches; cold cream, grease paint and liners; hair whitener, minstrel black and tooth enamel; highlights and shadows. Doris Marsolais Marshall of Helena, Montana, High School delves deep in her article, *i Make-Up*, into this essential art of the theatre.

THIRTEEN Silver Anniversary Regional Conferences are scheduled during the remaining five months of this school year. I hope you are planning to attend the one nearest to you. By the time we reach the climax of our celebration with our National Dramatic Arts Conference at Indiana University, Bloomington, scheduled the week of June 20, your society will already have assembled at our regional conferences approximately 7500 Thespians and their Sponsors. Our celebration is truly nation-wide.

OF OUR 71 national Charter Sponsors who were directly responsible for the birth of our organization in 1929, only two are still on our national roll at their originally chartered schools: Rose G. Smith, Sponsor of Troupe 23, Williamson, W. Va., High School, and Mary Miller, Sponsor, Troupe 59, Danville, Illinois, High School. Hoping to honor publicly these two teachers who have been so faithful and loyal to their respective schools and to The National Thespian Society, I asked them to write an editorial page for DRAMATICS. Miss Smith's editorial, *The Play's the Thing*, appears in this issue. In the February issue will be Miss Miller's contribution to our Silver Anniversary celebration.

WE walk down Broadway to the theatres with Paul Myers, who also takes us to the movies. We listen to the radio through the ears of Si Mills, who also shows us outstanding TV programs. Earl Blank calls our attention to plays successfully produced in our Thespian affiliated schools. Chattering away are our Thespians and brief-viewing so well is Willard Friederich.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

DESIGN FOR LAUGHTER
is the Pattern
of

"DOCTOR'S ORDERS"

A Hit Comedy
in Three Acts

By KURTZ GORDON

Letty Madden, spinster and major stockholder of the Madden Department Store, has jumbled dreams all because Adolph, her cousin and manager of the store, has arrested Rita Noris, his secretary, for the theft of \$5,000. Letty is positive of Rita's innocence and when Miss Arnold, Miss Powell and Miss Kent, three minor stockholders who make their own hats — WHAT HATS! — drop in for a chat and discuss Dr. Jordan, the handsome psychiatrist, Letty puts on an act to convince Agatha, her oh-so-proper sister, that she must see a doctor. Of course she insists upon Dr. Jordan. He diagnoses her case as inhibitions and tells her the only way to rid herself of them is to obey her every impulse on the spur of the moment regardless of the consequence. . . . And does she? . . . You bet! She runs the gamut from roller skating to shoplifting in her own store. And at the peak of it all, she exposes Adolph as the real thief and gets herself a man, too. The final curtain is terrific and will leave your audience in gales of laughter.

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THE GRAND TOUR

In the first four months of this school year nine Thespian Regional Conferences were scheduled throughout the United States as a part of our celebration of our Silver Anniversary. The average attendance at each conference was approximately 250 student Thespians and faculty Sponsors, thus totalling to date 2250 delegates. With 14 additional conferences still to be held, over 6000 Thespians will meet together in their own states. With an anticipated attendance of 1500 at our National Conference at Indiana University come June your society can be proud of bringing together throughout this year 7500 Thespians. To those who have met and will meet with us the word *National* will take on a deeper and understandable meaning. You who have remained and will remain at home will have missed a real opportunity to make the most of your membership in our society. It's a great year to celebrate — so let's celebrate!

Terre Haute, Indiana—November 21

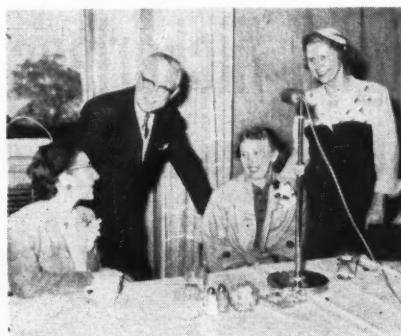
A more charming and gracious host school one cannot find than that of Indiana State Teachers' College. To Dr. Masters, Head of the Speech Department, both Mrs. Juanita Shearer, our Regional Director, who planned and executed the conference, and I are most grateful for his cooperation and assistance. I feel sure that the 250 plus delegates enjoyed every minute of this busy day. My congratulations to all our Sponsors and student Thespians who participated in the program. It was a job well done. Thank you, Mrs. Juanita Shearer.

St. Clairsville, Ohio—November 21

From the reports received in this office from Misses Florence Hill, our Ohio Regional Director, and Jean Donahey, National Councilor, this third Ohio area conference was another very successful project. Although the

As I See It . . .

attendance was not so large as that of our other conferences, Miss Hill was delighted with the excellent program. Miss Donahey also liked the close intimacy resulting from this small, but enthusiastic, meeting. She stated that of all the conferences which she had attended in the past she really had for the first time an opportunity to meet personally all the delegates. Thank you, John C. Alberico, Sponsor of Troupe 429 and chairman of the conference.



Mrs. Jen Southworth, Leon C. Miller, Doris Adley and Agnes Haaga, Northwestern Regional Conference, University of Washington, Seattle.

Massillon, Ohio—December 5

Of all the conferences I have attended to date I have yet to see a dramatic presentation

of one of our troupes which has not been superbly coached, well-acted and beautifully staged. I am further impressed with the time and energy taken to find the best plays. There is no doubt in my mind that Thespian affiliated schools are raising standards of the secondary school theatre throughout the country. I enjoyed every minute of our conference at Massillon, the fourth and final area conference held in Ohio this fall. Thank you, Mrs. Ilavere Carnes, hostess and conference chairman.

OUR ORCHID FOR THE MONTH

To Miss Florence Hill, Regional Director of Ohio, for assuming the responsibility to sponsor, not one, but four area conferences in her state. By her guidance and encouragement to our four Sponsors who accepted her assignments, she is indirectly responsible for assembling nearly 1000 Thespians and Sponsors at the four conferences. With such leadership one can readily understand why the state of Ohio leads all other states with 131 affiliated schools. I know that she will continue to lead her state to even greater achievements in the years to come.

NEED RECORDED SOUND EFFECTS?

Of interest to hi-fi fans, amateur movie makers and professional moving picture producers is the recent release by Thomas J. Valentino, Inc., of the *Major Sound Effect Records Catalogue*, 1953-1954. The compilation, listing many newly recorded sound effects and containing in addition new mood and bridge music, is a fertile source for ideas for backgrounds of all sorts. It is available free upon request to the publisher. By the way this company claims that it offers the largest selection of sound effects in existence.

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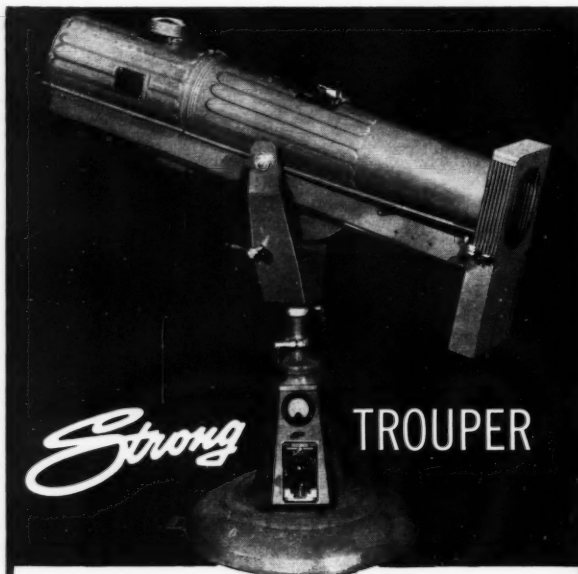
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THE PLAY'S

the THING

By ROSE G. SMITH



Miss Rose G. Smith, Sponsor of Troupe 23, Williamson, W. Va., High School.

IT IS easy to stand on a pinnacle two hundred years ahead and look back on and judge the progress of any activity. But looking back on twenty-five years of organized dramatic work in high school, one finds it difficult to say just what has been accomplished, actually. Naturally, we hope for much, but the perspective is too close. As Thespians, we have struggled for a well-done dramatics art program. That has been the aim of Thespians for twenty-five years. However, even with the amazing growth of Thespian troupes throughout the country, the spur to better drama, Thespian affiliation, does not reach far enough. Today, the percentage of Thespian troupes in our secondary schools is a little over five per cent. While this is encouraging compared with the less than one per cent twenty-five years ago, it is not enough for us to say that all high school plays are better. For Thespian sponsored plays must be better. There is, almost, a moral and social obligation to produce the best plays high school people can possibly do. I think this is very evident in our own Thespian festivals. Each year the plays become more and more effective. It is not unusual to see Thespian sponsored plays done with great sensitivity. Thespian sponsored plays consider lighting, sets, interpretation of the written word. The cast understands the meaning of "business." Thespian casts can and often do suggest a bit of staging which at times borders on genius.

When we consider that drama as an art is a combination of almost all the other arts and crafts, we must realize then that every other form of human activity is greatly influenced by it. Acting is not just learning and repeating words without falling over the footlights. So many other things enter into a well-done play. There are dozens of jobs to be done in play production. Flats do not build themselves; paint does not appear magically; spots do not of their own accord light up a countenance at the exact time it is needed; tickets do not just appear in the hands of playgoers, and publicity does not intrigue an audience without a great deal of human labor. Costumes must be made, or obtained in some way. Clothing must be prepared; gelatines, placed. I mention a few of the numerous items which mean "play production," and of which the average playgoer is totally unconscious. All he sees is the smooth performance. Only he who has worked with amateurs can conceive the tremendous activity involved in play work. Play work too is an outlet for the application of other learning. While actors learn interpretation, they also call upon their knowledge of journalism, art, music, home-making, interior decorating, physics, speech, English, dancing, design, teamwork — and they combine all of it in the single production of one play.

I believe that a conscientious director will imbue into his cast a certain understanding of all the requirements of good drama. But it takes more than a director and cast, working individually and without much excitement, to create in the minds of the general public a true concept of drama. Many administrators and a great many other people have the idea that drama is an extracurricular activity — that putting on a play is a small matter of raising money for some "worthy project." Some consider drama as a purely cultural and literary thing. Others see it as something harmless, if one likes that sort of thing, but why all the bother and fuss about it? Everybody knows that the cast is composed of high school students, and one can't expect too much! As I see it, the Thespian Society has done much to teach the communities in which active Thespian troupes are working, that drama IS a creative thing, but it is much more than that. It is also a science and a fine art. It typifies all the democratic principles of our American way of life. Thespians learn the fundamentals of civic responsibility, working together at all times to meet the horrible, fascinating deadline of opening night. They learn poise, self control, resourcefulness — they MUST if they happen to be on the stage when something goes wrong. They learn that a play must have a plan and a practical one. They find, once in a while, an outlet for their expressive energy and a remunerative work later in life. I can name without thinking about it, a dozen or more Williamson high school students now earning a livelihood at a work they love — some form of drama on the American stage or screen.

I cannot say that all communities are conscious of the theatre as they know it from Thespians, or that they are enthralled to have a Thespian troupe in town, but I do say that, unconsciously, many communities are better places to live in, and that they are increasingly proud of the talented sons and daughters who made their first acquaintance with their fascinating work on the high school stage.



Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.

GRAMMAR Schools in Switzerland are very theatre minded, the teachers and the educational authorities believing wholeheartedly in the necessity for all young people to see good plays and to take part in school productions during their school careers. There is apparently no reservation in this attitude, no opposition from any section who are either not convinced that to see and to act in plays is an educational benefit or who feel that the presentation of plays and contact with the theatre is harmful to the development of young people. The failure of the professional Children's Theatres in England is indicative of a wariness on the part of some educationalists to recognise the seeing of plays as part of education in spite of the great enthusiasm of most practising teachers, nor is there that measure of agreement between the professional theatres and the schools which is to be found in Holland, Switzerland, and some other European countries. It is the Swiss enthusiasm which is so refreshing.

In the Infant School stage there is little organised in the way of creative dramatics, but this is not to say that there is no dramatisation, playmaking or improvisation arising out of natural child play. Every good teacher sooner or later evolves something in the way of lessons which enable the children to play out the stories they have heard or the incidents within their limited experience and comprehension. So here in Switzerland, although the movement to codify and organise the work into a regular timetable subject has not taken place yet, there is plenty of informal work going on. In some schools they do perform little playlets about flowers, animals, winds, pixies, home life or some subject considered suitable to their age.

In the Junior School stage they definitely begin to perform short plays and present them on the school stage to an audience of their school mates. By the time the child reaches the Secondary School he has a good idea of what is meant by "doing a play" and it is here that the enthusiasm for acting develops and where the opportunities are provided

SECONDARY SCHOOL

DRAMA

IN SWITZERLAND

By GERALD TYLER

for it to do so. *Play acting is so much a part of the school life that it is almost impossible for a child to go through the school without taking part in a play; in fact in some places it is a rule that every boy or girl must have taken a part in a school play by the time he or she is seventeen years old.* It is more likely that the pupil has played several parts, but the interesting thing is that this check should be made and that it should be regarded as so important. Dr. Warner Klemm, president of the "Jugendtheater-gemeinde Basel" and himself a teacher at a Grammar School, remarked that there are two experiences which a Swiss boy always remembers — his three weeks in the Mountain School and his part in the school play. Uniform teaching and theatre interest are made a little difficult by the language problem, for there is a clear division between the German and Swiss speaking parts of the country. There is a Swiss dialect, which is spoken by people of all classes of society although there are variations in the dialects; for example, there is the dialect spoken by the educated people and there



Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*.

is the dialect which is commonly spoken by the labouring classes. Pupils attending school on the German speaking side are taught in High German and their language studies include the classical German dramatists, Schiller and Goethe, whose plays all schoolboys read and perform. On the French side the lessons are in French and the works of Racine, Moliere and Corneille are read and performed. In both cases the productions are usually in the hands of the language master concerned.



Giraudoux's *Ondre*

There are no Swiss classical dramatists, nor are there any modern Swiss authors, finding acceptance in their country today although Swiss authors, writing in German, often find a market and even achieve popularity in Germany. Both schools and the professional theatre look abroad for their plays and many school plays are performed both in translation into the Swiss dialect and in their original language. Common favourites for school production are Shakespeare (a wide variety), Shaw (*Pygmalion*, *Arms and the Man*), Barrie (*Dear Brutus*), Priestley (*They Came to a City*, *Time and the Conways*), Oscar Wilde (*The Importance of Being Earnest*), Thornton Wilder (*Our Town*) and Ibsen (*Nora*).

There does not appear to be much interest in using the Swiss dialect as a medium of dramatic expression by writers today; there is no effective Swiss dialect drama as, for example, we have here in Yorkshire where some playwrights are endeavouring to write plays in the dialect for the people hoping by so doing to preserve the interest in the dialect and to keep it alive as a medium for speech and writing. Nor does there appear to be that kind of movement which exists in Holland where, possessing few dramatists of their own, they are endeavouring to encourage Dutch drama by including modern Dutch works in the repertoires of the professional companies and more particularly by using these plays for school productions as a matter of policy. In some ways there are close comparisons between Swiss and Dutch theatre, similar plays in translation being presented. It is natural perhaps that in choosing foreign plays for performance that they should choose the best that the country has to offer and in choosing plays of high quality set such a standard of choice that the native dramatists are not appreciated and find it hard to compete. Many of our English writers would find it difficult to compete in a world where the audience had been brought up on Shakespeare, Shaw, Ibsen, Goethe and Moliere as their regular fare. Since experiment in native drama is not encour-

(Continued on page 31)



Dear Ruth, Troupe 51, Grundy Center, Ia. High School, Robert O. Wise, Jr., Director.

Scenery

IN considering the subject of scenery for the arena stage, we are immediately aware of the *absence* of scenery as we know it on the proscenium stage. There are no walls calling for the use of flats or draperies; no doors or windows as found on the proscenium stage; no backings, sky drops, or hanging pieces of scenery. There is a definite limitation in the use of step units and elevations. In fact instead of the absence of the *fourth wall*, there is an absence of the *four walls*; instead of the *illusion* of the *fourth wall*, there is the *illusion* of the *four walls*. How then can we suggest the pieces of scenery called for in a typical interior setting?

Doors. The generally accepted location of the doors to the arena interior is at the entrance aisles. Actors have not left the room until they disappear through the actual doors leading into the arena theatre, or through the drapes which may be hung at the entrances in the arena set up in a large room (as described in the article dealing with housing). It is inadvisable to have actors open and close imaginary doors as they enter and leave the actual acting area. Nothing is accomplished except to call attention to the absence of scenery.

Windows. The use of actual window frames is not recommended. Windows may be imaginary if essential to the action. A low window seat located possibly at one of the entrance corners not needed for entrance of actors can suggest the presence of a window. Also much can be effected by the use of lighting. An actor playing to an imaginary window and being bathed in sunlight or moonlight will certainly convey the effect wanted. In a production attended by the writer at *Theatre '52* in Dallas, the window was placed at the corner of the stage. There was much business calling for a character in various disguises to come to the window to peer into the room. It was an essential part of the play. The window was imaginary except for window drapes which extended from a height of about thirty inches to the floor. When the business

ARENA STAGING

Scenery, Properties, Sound

By TED SKINNER

called for closing the window, the actors merely closed the drapes and the audience seemed to accept the illusion.

Fireplaces. These also should be eliminated if merely decorative. If the fireplace is essential, it also may be located at a corner of the room. When a live fire is called for, a well constructed grate can achieve the effect. A skillful lighting job will complete the illusion. The use of andirons and logs cannot carry the illusion unless accompanied with subtle lighting.

Stairs. Once more, eliminate unless no substitution can be made. Generally stairs are assumed to be offstage. However, in a play, such as *Arsenic and Old Lace* in which Teddy's dramatic "charge" is such a high point of the play, it is possible to locate a step unit at a corner of the acting area leading to a platform landing. The use of a few steps in the arena will achieve the same effect as a long flight of steps on the proscenium stage.

Exterior pieces. Stumps, logs and benches, as well as low profile pieces, may be employed as on the proscenium stage. In our production of *The Silver Whistle* we placed a cut-out flower



Nancy Nieburger and Carol Jean Baldwin in *Goodbye, My Fancy*, Troupe 793, Fremont-Ross High School, Fremont, Ohio, Imogene Forsyth, Sponsor.

border along the edge of the acting area for the third act setting. A similar suggestion was effected by the Playhouse in Houston in a production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The Playhouse added to the effectiveness of the same setting by changing the floor covering for the exterior scene. Sections of masonite painted to represent tile for a patio were laid over the regular floor covering, together with a low brick trim along the edge of the acting area.

A final point to remember in connec-



Jane Eyre, Troupe 1051, Tunnelton, W. Va., High School, Joseph L. Vincent, Director.

tion with scenery for the arena is the fact that all pieces of scenery must be complete on all four sides, as all sides will be in view of the audience. Also most careful attention to detail in painting is necessary because of the proximity of the audience.

Properties

Furniture. It is important to remember that pieces of furniture must be kept to low backs. Thus it is necessary to avoid such pieces as high-back chairs, secretaries and cupboards. Bookcases should not exceed thirty inches in height. Much of the modern furniture can be used to advantage, particularly pieces that are open. Divans or sofas in which the characters may sit facing each other lend themselves to the arena. In using divans, keep in mind the old trick of building up the divan by placing a board under the cushions to prevent actor from sinking into them and having to dig himself out. Unless essential to the plot, pianos are best eliminated. If essential, the spinet (located at a corner) is preferable to the baby grand. It is best to eliminate the piano entirely from all except one set shows.

Decorative props. Wall mirrors, pictures and hangings must be changed to hand mirrors, table pictures and throw pieces. It is not wise to have actors gazing at imaginary pictures on an imaginary wall.

Hand props. Many substitutions and faking of food can be made on the proscenium stage which will not do in the arena. Beverages will need to be hot or cold as called for. Food must look like what it is to represent.

Telephones should be of the desk variety, preferably the French phone. Incidentally, careful attention must be paid to dialing before an arena audience.

Flower vases should be of the low style with the floral arrangement kept low.

Newspapers, magazines and books need to be in keeping with the time and place of the play. Members of the audience have been known to examine them during intermissions.

(Continued on page 30)

I

Make-Up

By DORIS MARSOLAIS MARSHALL

AS I walked briskly toward the hundreds of blinking lights of our sleepy Mountain village, AC Current was diligently at work pouring energy into the hundreds of incandescent lamps (surely mechanical madness or magic had replaced the old Lamplighter) and the Universe, My Town, looked like a Miniature Fairyland illuminated by a trillion Fireflies. I was hoofing the miles on a Frost-clear January nite toward My School!

Shep had been snoozing peacefully before the great native stone fireplace where the last remains of the Yuletide log was sending warmth into his elongating bones.

My, how he had grown!
No longer a Pup,
A Ball-of-Fluff
Playing at Hide 'n Seek,
But a half-grown Mutt,
That was sure 'nuf
Worth all his Board 'n Keep!
A Teen-Ager now with
A voice Deep, 'n How!

Responsibilities
Growing 'n Growing
With each day activities
thrived and the benefits
derived were indeed most
Gratifying!

He knew more than his
share of
Athletics, books and Theatrical
Fare,
But never once did it turn
his head;

Instead —
He Grew and Grew
in Stature and learning.
My friend! My Dog!

My soft whistle brot him sharply to his feet. He yawned, stretched and blinked a merry brown eye, whisked plungingly away to return with my blue and white ear-muff proudly bearing a capital "B" — and we were off —

Off to School. Out of the steady farm house past the fenced-in front yard with its tall Poplar trees and its surface piled high with downy-flaked snow like powdered sugar on a Baby's Birthday Cake.

The Shining Mountains were dimly outlined with a faint grey-purple tinge, and Deep Shadows extended their blackness far into the Prairies, solitude beyond the range where trees reached gaunt, bony fingers up toward a winter's sky heavily laden with snow-filled clouds

that hurried and scurried, being driven by an high, thin, faintly-whistling Wind!

Images, faces and fantastic shapes
appeared in the Legions of Clouds
that swept by. Shep barked gaily
at Pierrot and Pierrette, Harlequin
and Columbine and Peg O' My Heart.
Crowled throatily at Iago, Lady
Macbeth and Oedipus Rex! Such
Make-Up in turbulent grandeur was
wondrous to behold! Such artistry
of Line, Mass and Color.
Changing, Ever Changing,
integrating, disintegrating;

A Maize
then

An Emptiness,
then

A Momentary Completeness . . .

A glimpse of deep velvet sky, a Winter's star and the hard, brittle, metallic sound of an icicle dislodged; a far distant tinkling of a range cow bell, the coyotes wail; then Stillness!

Stillness except for the crunching of my heavy boots on the crusted snow, and



Our friend, Shep.

Shep's unceasing panting! All this was noisily interrupted by

"Hi, Soph, Hop in. Goin' to the Workhouse for the fancy make-up demonstration and class? Say, even I, a big-shot athlete, went for that show on Make-Up the Thespians sponsored in the Assembly today. 15c well spent, says I. National Assembly program, wasn't it? That guy was sure a good imitator of old Will Shakespeare's Characters, too. Not hard to take, that stuff! I'm going so I can learn to put that grease-paint on and help my old Man with the Eagle's Yearly Minstrel. He says Make-up's one of their worst problems. Sure glad we had Basket-ball practice after school today. Coach only wanted a few of last year's letter winners out to shoot baskets. Hardly had time to gobble down my supper. Had a keen venison roast too. Say, are you coming out for Varsity this year?"

Shep bristled when I said, "Yeah, guess I'll try!"

Humph! Dig that Romeo —
"Are you coming out for Varsity this year?"
Whatcha think we hoofed it the four miles into town for? Shaping up, That's what for! Boy, you just watch us; we're goin' to get that Pivot Post! Tall 'n skinny, That's us!

The sleek convertible of Jay's roared its long way onto Main Street and purred smoothly to Stage Door Entrance where Jim, our dark, solemn-eyed Stage Manager greeted us.

"Hi" for the men and a pat for me!

Needless to say Junior Miss Bette Belle and "Masks" were already there (It's nice to live in town, I guess) and we were shushed into silence and into the front house where a movie was about to begin, . . .

It was on color film,
Neat, compact and informative
on
Make-up for Girls
and Make-up for Boys, by

International News Bureau, Chicago, Illinois. Obtained thru our State Department of Visual Ed., and "Very Good," our teacher said, "in showing juvenile and character Make-up too," so we followed each step carefully thru.

There was a lot to remember about the cold cream and bases and to put everything in proper places —

Let's run them thru just one more time. It will help us with an art so fine!

Then we'll go back to our well-lighted mirrored table and do it "the first time" as well as we're able —

Now, shall we choose Max Factor's in a creamy style, or use Stein's in a stick for awhile? Shall we try pancake, or a liquid base? There's sure enuf kinds to suit any taste. It's going to be fun to use that crepe hair to shape a beard, make a wig or a mustache rare!

But first things should be first, so we'll just get a chair.

Now, that plastic, easy washable, cape we bot from the 5 and 10 we'll tie 'round our neck and then, —

Take cold cream pure,

Put it on thick without any demur (we bot the best to be found and bot it only by the pound!)

Then took Kleenex, used sparingly, Removed the excess quite properly.

Now pores had been filled and a smooth surface had we, and adjust the light well so we could see

To Apply Make-up Masterfully!

I had been curled up by My Master's feet despite the crowded room, but I was getting fidgety so I managed to squeeze

FOR INTERNATIONAL THEATRE MONTH

SIMPLE SIMON

by AURAND HARRIS

A young, innocent stranger comes to visit a totalitarian country, where no one thinks without the Queen's permission. He soon falls afoul of some of the Queen's arbitrary rules, and is thrown into prison, escapes execution by apologizing to the Queen, but pricked by his conscience, he whispers the truth into the ground. Miraculously, a tree grows from his whisper, and as it grows, its branches sing the truth aloud to the sky — "The Queen is a tyrant!" Once again he is sentenced to execution, when by the exercise of his natural talents, he is able to save the Princess' life, and the Queen learns that the personal freedom of her subjects is precious to the kingdom.

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my wiry form out on the stage. I didn't get too far 'cause an interesting book had fallen directly into my path. I looked at the title, *Paint, Powder and Make-up* by Edward Strauss. Altho the date was 1938, it still was timely and most complete and the way it dwelt on History was really very neat!

I yawned, stretched, puffed a sigh and settled down, keeping within eye-view of My Master's reflection in the mirror . . .

My Whiskers! What's that, Alice-in-Wonderland thru the glass? No! A Chronicler with a scroll in hand, Proclaiming to all the land The History of Make-up first hand!

Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye.
A wary savage, so 'tis said,
Hid from a storm-Demon behind
some bushes and ducked
his head.

As the scared one crouched
very low,
Praying that the evil thing
would go, —

The red sap of the bush
began to flow!
It covered his face and
Each twig made a grotesque line,
And to all this the Man was
sublime, and
Somehow the Demon had
departed, and
The Savage, happy and gay
went on his way

Past a quiet pool, but drew
back in horror and dismay!
A red-streaked terror! Heavenly day!
"Ah, ha," thot he, truly and historically,
"This is what chased the Demon away!"

But being a man with
a brain and a heart,
The red bush-painting was
only a start;
He ingeniously carved a
piece of wood,
With holes for his eyes
so he could
See his surroundings and not
scare his wife
and further get the storm
Demons out of his life!
Thus the Mask that hides
the real face,
Came into being for the human
race!
Then the Egyptians used
creams and perfumes and
Many vanity cases have been
found in excavated tombs!
They used it, their women, to
add to their charm,
and to be sure they didn't wish
to ward off harm!
In Greece and in Rome
the mask found its
home in festivals and
arenas great, and art entered
in and brot the tragic mask
and the one with the grin!
Life represented

Its sorrows and strife,

Its gaiety and color;
Its Day, and its Night,
Its Dark and its Light!

* * *

The Dark Ages came,
and the Theatre dissolved;
But out of it the Miracle Plays
evolved!
The Bible was Taught
and sinful ways
Were driven home, — people
to faze!
Characters were made up
in roles to portray
Especially the Devil, with
great display;
But this was all doomed,
Lasted but briefly and fell
in decay and was lost clear
thru the Famous Bard's (Shakespeare's)
Day!

For then the Playwright
was King and no make-up
or set were needed to enhance
the scene!
Pageantry came forth, then
candles, oil lamps and lights
so ghastly, and little is recorded
of what make-up was afforded!
But 'twas known that black
crayon in tubes was used
on underlids, and a fish-
lime solution on beards
and wigs!
Then came the magical
incandescent lamp and the

(Continued on page 29)



Berkeley Square, Troupe 191, Webster Groves, Mo., Roberta Seibert, Sponsor, 1952-53.



Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, Troupe 1117, Bishop Hogan High School, Kansas City, Mo., Sister Mary Jovita, S.C.L., Sponsor.



'Sno Haven as presented by Troupe 59, Danville, Ill., High School, Mary Miller, Sponsor.

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

Edited By EARL BLANK

BERKELEY SQUARE

Webster Groves, Mo., High School

FANTASY seems to have become more popular in the past few years possibly due to the amount of interest in science-fiction; so, now is a good time to stage a revival of *Berkeley Square*. It is a mature play and sophisticated in the true sense of the word. It requires a mature cast and careful direction; but it is within the capabilities of a high school cast. The most difficult role is that of Peter Standish, who is intelligent, sensitive and highstrung and who carries the show emotionally and actually from the standpoint of number of lines.

The play is challenging in that it offers a variety of characters for portrayal, including 18th Century characters, who might have been written by Sheridan or Goldsmith. There are many occasions to build scenes emotionally and there is an opportunity for period acting and movement.

Rehearsals may be scheduled so that either the 18th or the 20th Century cast is present and the entire group need not be called until the last week. This saves the students' time and the director's energy.

There is also ample opportunity for the technical staff. Costumes can be designed and made for less money than rental charges today. Actually only twelve women's and nine men's period costumes are needed. The remainder of the actors wear modern dress. A set must be designed which will serve for both 18th and 20th Century scenes and should be lighted so that a difference in period is felt. Large crews are advisable for the quick drapery and furniture changes.

Here's a show where the backstage workers feel that they have contributed obviously to the success of the play. It's a show which requires hard work that soon becomes a labor of love. It's worth the time and effort that's required to produce it because it is aesthetically fine and it is a good box office attraction too.

ROBERTA SEIBERT, Sponsor, 1952-1953.
Troupe 191

—O—

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN

Owatonna, Minn., High School

IN selecting *Annie Get Your Gun*, I was frankly looking for a play with a new and different flavor. It presents staging problems, but we later found that this challenge gave added incentive to the whole Troupe as well as the cast.

Since the story is not serious in nature, we decided on a very gay, musical comedy-type setting. We painted a huge

1929—SILVER ANNIVERSARY REGIONAL CONFERENCES—1954

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MISSOURI—Mary Williams, Regional Director, Chrisman High School, Independence — April 23, 24.
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IOWA—Cecile Rughaber, Chairman, Wilson High School, Cedar Rapids—March 27.
MONTANA—Frederick K. Miller, Regional Director; Doris Marshall, Asst. National Director, at Helena High School, Helena—April 1, 2.
FLORIDA—Eunice A. Horne, Regional Director, Robert E. Lee High School, Jacksonville—February 25, 26, 27.
PENNSYLVANIA—(Eastern): Frieda Reed, Maizie Weil, Regional Directors, Senior High School, Upper Darby—March 20.
PENNSYLVANIA—(Western): Jean Donahey, Chairman, Senior High School, Brownsville—Spring.
VIRGINIA—Genevieve Dickinson, Regional Director, William Fleming High School, Roanoke, —March 5, 6.
MICHIGAN—Margaret L. Meyn, Regional Director, at Western, Mich., College—February.
NEW ENGLAND—Emily Mitchell, Regional Director; Barbara Wellington, National Sr. Councilor, at Emerson College—February.
NEW JERSEY—Gertrude Patterson, Regional Director, Highland Park High School, Highland Park—April 3.
OREGON—Mabel Marie Ellefson, Regional Director, Springfield High School, Springfield — March 6.

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JUNE 21-26, 1954

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of the human and humorous situations applicable to both young and old, the play was received with tremendous ovations at all four performances.

The bunk scene and the measles scene were two of the most hilarious scenes of the play. The audience rocked with laughter during the bunk scene when Emily's uncontrolled fear of the boat sinking kept her running up and down the ladder of the bunk beds, when all should have been slumbering. All were in stitches at Cornelia's attack of measles, which is a pathetic but ludicrous spectacle to behold.

The tempo of the play was rollicking all through and the cast of seventeen had just as much fun as did the audience. The rewards came with all the favorable acclaim and credit given the production when many termed it "professional," thus making it a delightful, thrilling and gratifying experience for director, cast and spectators.

Together with memories of the production the audience took home for a souvenir a personal letter, a photostatic copy, from Cornelia and Emily briefing the highlights of their European trip.

SHIRLEY MARIE FOWLER, Reporter,
Troupe 1117

'SNO HAVEN (It's No Haven)

Danville, Illinois, High School

LAUGHS — thrills — chills! Yes, Lee and Lynde Miller's three-act suspense play, *'Sno Haven*, offers "all this and romance, too." Never before has one of our plays met with such perfect audience

reaction, alternating moments of breathless silence with hilarious laughter.

Real-life people make up the large cast; every member becomes a distinct individual as the action gathers momentum and the play progresses. A rare opportunity — that of entering into and trying to solve the mystery — is given to the audience, so that each cash customer becomes an amateur Sherlock Holmes.

The second act is one that appeals to any director and cast. It opens on a totally dark stage with only shadowed movements suggesting secret and underhanded design. Again, the act closes on a darkened stage when, late at night, the thirteen-year-old prodigy takes a hand in solving the mystery and risks death in an encounter with the communist agent.

The setting is ideal — a lonely mountain lodge on a snowy evening in February. All the action takes place within twenty-four hours, calling for little change in costume — a vital factor in a play with a large cast. Too, a minimum of properties and a wealth of explicit and correct stage directions place this well-written play in the production range not only of the well-seasoned director but of the newcomer as well.

MARY MILLER, Sponsor,
Troupe 59

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'SNO HAVEN
BERKELEY SQUARE
ANNIE GET YOUR GUN
OUR HEARTS WERE
YOUNG AND GAY

back drop with outdoor scene, plus wings of trees, bushes and other shrubbery. The traveler curtain closed over this basic set; thus the train coach, deck of ship, and other scenes we placed in front of traveler curtain. For the third act, the garden party scene, we used some wood wings which we have here plus garden furniture, arches and flowers to change the whole atmosphere. The audience was completely thrilled by the bright colors and very snappy costumes.

The girls made fringed skirts and bolero jackets; cowboy boots, hats, and jeans were easy to find. Indian blankets and headdresses added color too. Our Annie was superb, but the whole cast caught the spirit and just had fun. We



Richard Dugan and Sharon Kind in *Annie Get Your Gun*, Troupe 971, Owatonna, Minn., High School, Helen Steppe, Sponsor.

played songs from the musical comedy between acts to tie the entire performance together.

It was altogether a delightful, unique and satisfying experience for our Thespian Troupe.

HELEN STEPPE, Sponsor,
Troupe 971

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Hogan High School, Kansas City, Mo.

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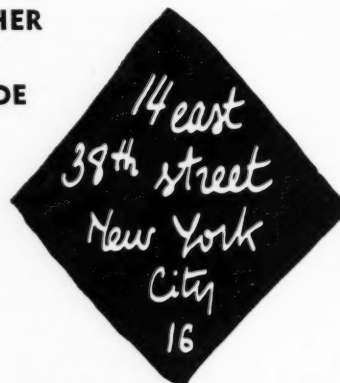
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ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS shows, in a series of quick-moving scenes, the critical years of Lincoln's early manhood up to the moment of his election as President. We see the backwoodsman, a failure at shopkeeping, but a great favorite with friends and neighbors, slowly groping forward through the troubled years in Springfield, at last beginning to realize the great destiny before him. The play ends with that magnificent speech of his made from the train that takes him to Washington.

STAGE DOOR

This comedy by Edna Ferber and George S. Kaufman is particularly appealing and warmhearted. The large cast is especially attractive to schools looking for plays to give opportunity to many players. **11 men and 21 women.** May be played in one interior setting. Cuts and other changes supplied on separate mimeograph free on application. **Books, 90¢. Fee, \$25 a performance.**

The Story concerns a group of young girls who have come to New York to study acting and find jobs. The scene is Mrs. Orcutt's boarding-house, where the hopes and ambitions of sixteen young women are revealed in scenes of entertaining comedy. The central plot has to do with courageous Terry Randall, who fights against discouragement to a position in the theater where we are sure she will conquer. One of her fellow-aspirants gives up in despair, one gets married, and one goes into the movies, but Terry, with the help of idealistic David Kingsley, sticks to her guns. Color and contrast are offered in the scenes involving the young women by the characters of Mattie, the maid; Frank, her husband; a few young men callers; a movie magnate and young Keith Burgess, the playwright who "goes Hollywood."



Illustrations by Jesse Spicer.
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DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, Inc.

14 EAST 38TH STREET, NEW YORK 16, N. Y.



Cathy and Elliott Lewis Onstage Columbia Broadcasting System

YOU'RE always glad to see people you know get ahead. That's one of the reasons this show is so pleasing. Cathy, you may remember, was Jane Stacey, the roommate on *My Friend Irma*, while Elliott uses his own name as Phil Harris' crony. He has other distinctions too: served as narrator for Gordon Jenkins' recording of *Manhattan Towers*, and he is producer-director of *Suspense*. And as if these were not enough to keep a fellow busy, he has been a partner in a dress shop, stockholder-vice-president in Command Radio Productions, and he and Cathy independently author radio "dramats." You may wonder why such enterprising people are so active in a field that seems on the verge of replacement by TV. The illusion of death is not shared by the Lewises.

He explains it by saying: "Radio drama is as indestructible as man's imagination . . . When a program or story idea forms in my mind, I do not have to stop my thinking midway and back up to look at the budget. In the middle of a creative thought, I do not have to cross-examine myself with questions on the practical side. How many sets would be required? What props? How elaborate a wardrobe? How many feet of film clip? . . . I deal in a wholly creative field — radio drama. With sound alone I create pictures. My only limitation is the boundless sphere of my audience's imagination. The picture that results varies in the mind of each listener. But it can be anything — right up to and beyond 3-D and Technicolor!"

Formula plots and traditional endings go out the window on this show. And, according to the program's weekly mail pull, listeners like it that way. Letters addressed to the program consistently praise its adult presentation. Persistent respect is shown for the listener's ability to think for himself, an attitude which eliminates hackneyed situations and stereotyped dialogue.

Don't be misled by the title; there are others in the cast besides Mr. and Mrs. Elliott Lewis; but after the show is finished and you think back over it, you realize that the spotlight has at no time left either one of the pair, although it has been shared by others. This unity is enriched by a smoothness which pervades the entire thirty-minute period. The Lewis team has done a good deal to give impetus to the renewed growth of radio.



Elliott and Cathy Lewis, co-producers and stars of CBS-Radio's *Cathy and Elliott Lewis Onstage*.

Horatio Hornblower

American Broadcasting Company

The C. S. Forrester character, who has been the leading figure in several recent novels and in a popular movie, has now been brought to radio in adaptations of his adventurous exploits. The title role is played by the well-known film star, Michael Redgrave. For those who have met "Mr. Hornblower" before in literary form, it is like coming upon an old friend. To others it is understandable why this hero has been taken into the hearts of so many.

Hornblower, as in the novels, is not a swashbuckling roustabout. On the contrary, he is calm and deferential. You hear the stirring stories of battles at sea and of other naval adventures. You take part in these happenings. And yet for

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all the excitement that is created you are able to retain some of the central figure's equanimity. The secret originally was in Forrester's writing. But here it is more than just that. The writing has been well adapted, capably directed and most ably acted.

Can You Top This?

National Broadcasting Company

Although *Can You Top This?* has been around for a number of years, there are — as far as I know — no imitators. That is not surprising either, because the participants are endowed with a special facility for remembering and telling jokes. The format is this:

Peter Donald, able story-teller, spins a yarn sent in by a listener. The laughter evoked by the punchline is made known by a meter. Then each of the three panel members tells a joke, the subject having been set by Donald. The procedure can generally be fully completed twice in the 15-minute sting, and the audience is assured of at least eight topnotch funny stories. The initial laugh-getter is awarded \$25 and each measured tie or betterment by a panelist means a five-dollar deduction. Anyone coming off with all of the original earnings receives the special bonus of a recording of his "funny" as it was told on the air.

This format has several advantages over the usual single comedian program. For one thing it means that there isn't only one person on his verbal toes. There can be a sharing of the load. The listener for the other part can be assured of hearing a variety of styles. Then too it isn't a matter of a man carrying on a monologue and trying to improve on himself. If you want to have a good time laughing, this is one program to try.

Shortwave

Several months ago a friend, having learned that I am interested in radio, passed on to me an all-wave set given to him. His interest in radio is one of many years' standing, and his aim, was that of trying to win a convert to "ham" radio. For me it was like waking up suddenly to something that had been within reach for a long time.

The "standard broadcast" band can be dismissed quickly since that is the one most commonly known and written about. It is the rest that merits attention: foreign broadcasts, hams (amateur operators), police calls, marine radio, ship-to-shore telephone (which is actually shortwave) — in fact any broadcasting that is not commercial. There is no time format, no pre-arranged plan. You cannot consult a newspaper for schedules. It is like listening to a private conversation without secrets — or else the participants would not use so public a vehicle. Shortwave receivers are not confined to the realm of the wealthy. A set can be bought for less than \$50.00. That isn't much for a ticket of admission to a vast new theatre.



Ding Dong School

National Broadcasting Company

Since we're speaking about a stanza devoted to minors, let's take the opportunity to examine another on the same network, but aimed at attracting younger children. This widely discussed show is primarily for the pre-school age. Adults watching the proceedings are annoyed by the pace — or lack of it. They fail to realize that the ability to comprehend and assimilate is slower in the desired audience. True or not, the story is told that when Miss Frances, school-marm of Ding Dong School, first began her show, she was approached by the station's bigwigs who were accustomed to more



Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz of *I Love Lucy*.

I Love Lucy

Columbia Broadcasting System

THE queen of television comedians is a woman named Lucille Ball. When news of her future series first was made public, many persons — myself included — regarded Miss Ball's movie career as being little more than the display of a curvaceous figure supported by very poor scripts. We expected the television series to be more of the same. Now we are eating crow, and aren't at all ashamed to admit it.

Miss Ball has gotten away from the "beautiful but dumb" routines. No place in the many programs I have seen has there been any mention of looks. Nor is Lucy dumb. She is generally on the short end by the finish of each show, but the time leading to the final scene is used in displaying her wily technique. For instance, a recent half-hour was spent by starting with a scene in which Lucy makes a \$100 bet with three people (her husband included) that she can go through a 24-hour period without telling a single fib. The shenanigans that follow are a pursuit of a common problem with the accompanying overtones and complications. Swell writing and acting give high color and excitement. Lucy's eyes and facial expressions are always sparks to a highly amusing half hour.

Excursion

National Broadcasting Company

The Ford Foundation has spent hundreds of millions of dollars thus far in many different fields. These are not investments for which financial return is expected. For the most these are philanthropic pursuits, calculated to be spurs. They are not confined to this country, but frequently this is the scene of activity. Last year, for instance, the Foundation allocated \$2,000,000 for its work on *Omnibus* on the Columbia Broadcasting System. There was a dual aim involved. First, it was held that commercial broadcasting could perform a capable job of bringing worthy entertainment to view-

ers. And therein lies the second aim — worthy entertainment. The level of TV generally was boosted by the existence of a single series.

It was soon realized, however, that a large part of the public was being neglected. Can you expect youngsters from eight to twelve to sit still all through a 90-minute show? And can you ask them to be enthralled by the same fare that keeps their elders occupied? The two questions are intertwined and call for serious thought. After all, if you are trying to raise the cultural level of the seniors, are you going to do it at the expense of the juniors? The obvious answer is a new endeavor, originally titled *Junior Omnibus* but finally called *Excursion*.

The program's guide — following the tour idea throughout planning (that title is a much better choice than "master of ceremonies") is Burgess Meredith, film actor and director. His learning as father of two has impressed him with the need to avoid talking down to his audience. That undoubtedly explains why an adult can tune in and not feel that he is poaching. The circumvention of solicitous language or attitude is valuable aids in presenting a series that has demonstrated excellent taste in subject matter. And that material — calculated to instruct and entertain — has not suffered either from loftiness of purpose or strait-jacketing of broadcast time.

For instance, the program one week was mainly devoted to a piece of original drama about a boy and his part in the American Revolution. When the play was over — and a well-staged and well-acted job had been done — the remaining few minutes were used by a magician (Jay Marshall) who supplied a lighter touch. Neither part had been stretched or compressed. It was exemplary of the usual balance and good taste.



Dr. Frances Horwich (Miss Frances to her many viewers), who conducts NBC-TV's *Ding Dong School*.

speed, and told to start rolling. She purportedly answered that she does not tell them how to run their business and that she would appreciate the same courtesy.

"Miss" Frances is actually using an incorrect title, because she has a Ph.D. from Northwestern University and therefore has the right to be called Doctor. She feels, however, that children might confuse it and mistake her for a medical person.

This willingness to forego the non-material has pervaded the thirty-minute-five-days-a-week series. The unhurried easy style from beginning to end is an object lesson to all entertainment and educational media.

As this article was being written, a three-year-old neighbor saw the attached photo, and piped up with, "It's Miss Frances." Need any more proof that the lady is hitting her target?

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Notwithstanding, the film does move relentlessly toward its tragic climax.

From the moment that Iago begins to plant the seed of jealousy in Othello's mind, the momentum of the film gets under way. Michael MacLiammoir, of the Dublin Gate Theatre, does a fine job as the villainous Iago. Suzanne Cloutier makes a beautiful and pitiable Desdemona. Fay Compton, one of Britain's finest Shakespearean actresses, is the Emilia. While the film does not quite rank with Sir Laurence Olivier's *Hamlet* or *Henry V*, it is a worthy film record of Shakespeare's tragedy of the Moor of Venice.

Walt Disney is certainly proving his versatility as a movie-maker. His *The Living Desert*, which is now showing at many theatres about the country, is another in the vein of his studies of natural life. The short animated cartoons continue to amuse with their ingenuity. No one since Aesop has related so closely the antics of the animals with those of human beings. Mr. Disney has just produced *Rob Roy*, which is being distributed by RKO Radio Pictures.

The producers of the film have announced that "the Walt Disney *Rob Roy* owes nothing to Sir Walter Scott's story of the same name. Rather it goes back to the ancient histories of the clan MacGregor and relates the heroic attempts of Rob Roy, the most famous MacGregor, to stand out against the cruel oppression of the absentee kings and politicians."

Lawrence E. Watkin's screenplay begins after the Battle of Sheriffmuir in 1716. Once again the Stuart cause has failed and the pretender James has sailed back to France. The film relates how the Highlanders eventually secure an honorable peace. The high point of the film is the superb scenery. Much of the shooting was done in the Rob Rob country — in the Trossachs — and all in Technicolor. Added to the natural beauty is the magnificence of the Scottish costume. Richard Todd plays the title role and Glynis Johns plays Helen Mary.



Orson Welles and Michael MacL'annmoir
in **Othello**.

Warner Brothers have produced a film biography of the pop-eyed comedian of stage, screen, radio and television. Eddie Cantor has been a top-liner for almost forty years. Many of you who see him cavorting on television's *Comedy Hour* will enjoy the re-creation of some of his past theatre experiences in *The Eddie Cantor Story*. Keefe Brasselle enacts the title role and Marilyn Erskine plays his wife Ida.

Carol Reed's *The Man Between* is set in the divided city of post World War II Berlin. Claire Bloom plays a British girl who comes to the German capital to spend a brief vacation with her brother, a British Army medico, and his German wife. All too soon she becomes involved in the tensions of the divided city. The climactic chase is as taut and nerve rending a sequence as I have witnessed in the films in a long time. James Mason gives a fine performance as does Hildegard Neff and Dieter Krause. Ljuba Welitsch is heard and seen in a fine series of bits of Richard Strauss' *Salome*.

Twentieth Century-Fox has released its second venture in Cinemascope. In an obvious effort to show the versatility of the process they have chosen a vastly different story and type of film than *The Robe*. The film is called *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. The film stars Marilyn Monroe, Betty Grable, Lauren Bacall and David Wayne. The mere recital of these names should give some concept of the temper of the film. It is brittle, replete with witicism and an effort to be roughish.

This account must close with a brief mention of the new Red Skelton movie, *The Great Diamond Robbery*. It is cast very much in the typical Skelton mold, but will delight the numerous fans of the comedian. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has cast the team of Kurt Kaszner and James Whitmore (paired in *Kiss Me Kate*) in the film, and Dorothy Stickney.



A scene from United Artists' **Othello**.



By PAUL MYERS

MIDWAY through a theatre season is a fine point for a bit of stock-taking. The chief merit of the current season has resided in the variety and number of artists we have been privileged to see. It has been truly an actor's season. Very often the drama has been weak but the actor has been given a rare chance to shine.

Let us first honor our visitors from abroad. Alejandro Ulloa has brought from Madrid a fine company of actors. Their repertoire has included Calderon's *Life Is like That*, Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* as well as examples of modern Spanish drama. Theatregoers whose Spanish is as non-existent as mine will miss some of the dramatist's subtleties, but they will find great satisfaction in the playing of the troupe. The technical aspects of the production are fine and it is hoped that this ensemble will return soon and give us further glimpses into the theatre of Spain.

The largest contingent is made up of actors who are more often associated with the film screen than the legitimate stage. Rosalind Russell is still doing the leading role in Leonard Bernstein's musical adapted from *My Sister Eileen—Wonderful Town*. The book of the show has been created by Betty Comden and Adolph Green. Coupled with their *On the Town* of several seasons ago, *Wonderful Town* sets this pair as the lyric theatre's authorities on New York.

Deborah Kerr is doing the sensitive pedagogue's wife in Robert Anderson's *Tea and Sympathy*. Margaret Sullivan, absent from Broadway since *The Voice of the Turtle*, is playing opposite another film favorite, Joseph Cotten, in *Sabrina Fair*. Samuel Taylor's slight play about the romance between a moneyed gentleman and the daughter of a chauffeur seems a trifle old-hat, but the performances are sterling. Mention must be made too of Vanessa Brown, who is still adding mightily to the fun of *The Seven Year Itch*.

Charles Boyer has held a top spot among screen favorites for more than twenty years. His stage appearances have, on the whole, been quite successful, including, as they do, Sartre's *Red Gloves* and his engagement in *Don Juan in Hell* as part of the First Drama Quartet. He is currently appearing with Mary Martin (who can do no wrong) in Norman Krasna's *Kind Sir*. This venture was a hit before its tryout engagement. The drawing power of the two stars was enough to sell the production to the theatre-goers . . . and a good thing, too.

Seldom has a play been treated so harshly as has *Kind Sir*. One critic has described it as "Mary Martin and Charles Boyer operating in a total vacuum." It is, however, a smooth, handsome looking production and it will continue to fill the Alvin Theatre as long as its stars can remain in the cast.

Jose Ferrer has in recent years proven his ability to cope with the hazards of film-making as easily as with those of the theatre. His Hollywood stints have brought him to a larger audience and a large segment of this audience is crowding into the City Center to see him in his season of four plays. With the exception of Shakespeare's *King Richard III*, Mr. Ferrer has been seen before in New York in all of the offerings. The municipal theatre inaugurated the season with

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MARIE McNETT

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I had a very pleasant time at Rosemary Casey's *Late Love*, which is now at the Booth Theatre. The only discordant note was the reminder that Lucile Watson has announced that this will mark her final stage appearance. Miss Watson has been active in the theatre for fifty years and one remembers her magnificent performances in such plays as *No More Ladies*, *Yes My Darling Daughter*



Hume Cronyn, Norman Lloyd and Jessica Tandy in a scene from *Madam, Will You Walk*.

Cyrano de Bergerac and the second bill was Joseph Kramm's *The Shrike*. Judith Evelyn appeared in her original role in the latter. After the Shakespeare tragedy, Mr. Ferrer will once again appear as Lord Fancourt-Babberly in that indestructible comedy of Brandon Thomas, *Charley's Aunt* ("from Brazil — where the nuts come from").

A very exciting venture has been initiated on lower Second Avenue. This has been for many years the center of New York's Yiddish theatre. In the theatre which was once the Yiddish Art Theatre, Norris Houghton and T. Edward Hambleton have installed the Phoenix Theatre. The opening attraction is a play by the late Sidney Howard, *Madam, Will You Walk*. This work was once slated as a venture for George M. Cohan but it never reached Broadway. In the Phoenix Theatre production, Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn are playing the major roles. It would be vastly encouraging to see this venture prosper. This is genuine professional theatre at a base removed from the center of theatre activity.

and *Watch on the Rhine*. Two screen appearances stand out in my memory most clearly — the cinema duplication of Lillian Hellman's *Watch on the Rhine* and *Waterloo Bridge*.

In *Late Love* Miss Watson plays the mother of a stuffy, wilful, but charming, tyrant. For years she has been willing to assume the blame for the relentless arrogance of her son's life. It takes the clear-sightedness of a lady who, at first, loves this man, to see through the hoax and to bring a bit of happiness to the aging mother. Neil Hamilton and Arlene Francis do well in the other major roles of *Late Love*. John C. Wilson staged the production.

Enough space remains to report that the new Dramatists Committee, the group which has done so much to aid new playwriting talents, is about to start its activity for this season. The first production will soon open at the Academy of Dramatic Arts Theatre (formerly the Guild Theatre and the Anta Playhouse). Such efforts deserve the support of everyone interested in the health of our theatre.



Formal initiation, Troupe 595, Shortridge High School, Indianapolis, Ind., Eleanor Dee Theek, Sponsor.

TYLER, TEXAS

We had a most successful and drama-packed year. The club worked tirelessly on and presented such one-act productions as *Curse You, Jack Dalton*, *Antic Spring*, *The Devil and Daniel Webster* and a cutting from *The Glass Menagerie*. The club also was responsible for the senior play, *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*. The Tyler Thespian troupe is most proud of being responsible for and being the first school to be host to the East Texas Drama Festival which was quite a success. Tyler is quite proud of this achievement and sincerely hopes that this festival will be the beginning of closer unity between fellow Thespians and as it continues to grow to create more well-rounded dramatic sportsmanship.—Mary Lou Henry, Secretary.

—0—

PRESTON, IDAHO

We really did ourselves proud with our annual play, *Night Must Fall*, Emlyn Williams' tense mystery. Again this year we sponsored a talent contest open to all high school students. We hope to sponsor a similar program yearly. Members of our troupe also participated in various speech, declamation and poetry festivals, in the school play, one-act plays, and in a good old fashioned "melter dramer."

All in all we've enjoyed a very successful year, but we could never have accomplished all these things without our capable, and shall we say, lovable director. Our hats are off to Calvin Quayle.—Meredith Nelson, Reporter.



Beverly Ray and Janet Shipley in *Kiss and Tell*, Troupe 1288, Glen Burnie, Md., High School, Lillian H. Dexter, Sponsor.

Troupe 1003

MAYNARD, IOWA

The audience was startled when the senior class presented *Curtain Going Up*. Action took place throughout the auditorium, among the people and on the stage.

A variety of plays was prepared for contest: *A Minuet* (French Revolution flavor), *The Room Upstairs* (tearjerking drama), and *Hog Business* (just what the name implies). Among noise of drums and screams *Drums of Death* was produced by the junior class. Troupe 211 initiated 22 new members in the spring of '53. The club was also proud to honor three four-star Thespians.

Music closed the year for us. Thespians and vocal groups joined forces to produce an old time minstrel. *The Red Velvet Goat*, a silly,

Troupe 211

climaxed this year's activities.—Janet Barber Secretary.

—0—

BEAVER, WEST VIRGINIA

Troupe 69

We were very active during the 1952-1953 season. The senior class presented the three act comedy, *Men Are like Street Cars*, and the junior class gave *Junior Prom*.

In March we held our formal initiation with our parents as guests. We initiated 13 new members, which boosted our troupe number to 22. Mrs. Preston Crosby, our troupe sponsor awarded a pin to Hazel Pendleton for achieving Honor Thespian. Sue Cooper and Modest Vogt were selected the "Best Actress" and "Best Actor" of the troupe.

Thespian Chatter

confused Mexican play made up the second act of the minstrel and left the actors and audience dizzy, but happy. Thus closed a very successful season for the Maynard Thespians.—Helene Bencke, Secretary.

—0—

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA Troupe 1146

The Edina Morningside chapter of National Thespians opened its first curtain of the season on the junior class play, *Our Miss Brooks*. For the mid-winter play the Edina players decided to take on a suspenseful thriller in the form of *High Ground*, a highly dramatic play. The senior class put forth their last and best dramatic effort through the hilarious comedy, *Arsenic and Old Lace*. The troupe closed the season and the departing seniors bade their farewells at a delightful party in the home of one of our Thespians.—Judy Veilleux, Recorder.

—0—

PRESCOTT, ARIZONA Troupe 735

We gave two full-length plays this year: *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *The Moon Makes Three*. *Why the Chimes Rang* was presented for the twenty-first time at the Christmas season. In the spring the dramatics class entertained the student body with a lively comedy, *Sugar and Spice*. At a pot luck supper-clean-up night members and pledges gave a real spring house-cleaning to the stage, the costume, props, and dressing rooms. Later in the year came the formal initiation. The awarding of stars and the "Best Thespian" awards in honor assembly

Our final production was the one-act play *The Purple Doorknob*. This was the first play to be presented in Shady's new \$100,000 gymnasium-auditorium. Our presentation of *The Purple Doorknob* also received superior rating at the Regional Drama Festival. Eliza Griffin and Margaret Sue Lilly were named on the festival cast.—Hazel Pendleton, President.

—0—

KIRKLAND, WASHINGTON

Troupe 27

The Blackouts of '53, the annual talent show was the biggest production for the Lake Washington High Thespian Club. The *Blackouts* centered around the idea of a local beauty queen going to New York to be crowned. Script writing, costuming, stage settings and all production details were originated and accomplished by the students. The *Pirates of Penzance*, an operetta presented with the aid of the music department, was also a large-sized undertaking. In addition we gave *Now Is the Time* a political one-act play, and planned Armistice Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas assemblies. Marian Hawkins, Secretary.

—0—

BELLE VERNON, PENNSYLVANIA Troupe 98

The Bellmar Thespians started the year activities in grand style with the formal initiation of the new members before their families and friends. The major project of the group was the presentation of the three-act comedy *Take Care of My Little Girl*. The remainder of the year was spent working on one-act plays.



Formal installation of officers, Troupe 546, Fulton, Ill., Community High School, Eleanore Bieler, Sponsor.

and make-up. A local theatrical group sent a very interesting speaker to talk to us. As a reward for a year of hard work, the troupe attended the Pittsburgh Playhouse to see *Payment Deferred*.—Ruth Redigan, President.

CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND Troupe 230
During a dinner at the Shrine Country Club following the initiation of new members our sponsor, Helen Smith, stated that we were approaching the end of our most successful year. Our calendar of events for this year of achievement includes: October, an evening of plays in competition for the inter-class tournament awards; November, original script, Mr. President, presented at the school assembly; December, the children's play, *The Sleeping Beauty of Loreland*, and Christmas recital of the Choral Speaking Choir; February, the play, *The Little Minister*; March, initiation and dinner party; April, Speaking Choir in its Easter program; May, an original pageant for May Day celebration; June, troupe picnic.—Barbara Ann Campbell, Reporter.

ELMHURST, ILLINOIS Troupe 94
The major project of our troupe was the presentations of *Drama Night* which consisted of three one-act plays: Eugene O'Neill's *Where the Cross Is Made*, Moliere's *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, and Walter Prichard Eaton's *The Purple Door*.

Thespians members assisted with the operetta, *The Mikado*, and with all class plays. At York's Mardi Gras we presented a skit many times throughout the evening. All members and apprentices enjoyed the club's annual trip to Chicago to see a professional play. This year the production was *Dial M for Murder*.—Mary Haimbaugh, Reporter.

WOODSTOCK, ILLINOIS Troupe 991
Our dramatic year opened with the all-school

play, *You Can't Take It with You*, directed by the assistant sponsor, Don Edwards. For Christmas, we gave *Santa Saves the Evening* and *Pop Reads the Christmas Carol*, two one-act plays. The senior class play was *Goodbye, My Fancy*, directed by the sponsor, Marjorie Young. The junior class gave three one-act plays: *The Trysting Place*, *Our Lean Years*, *The Dear Departed*. This was the first such event in our school in some years. We closed the year with two one-act plays, *Boy Meets Family* and *Sham*.—Michael A. Hall, Vice-President.

FOLLANSBEE, WEST VIRGINIA Troupe 577
We rang down the curtain on another enjoyable and busy year. Thespians began activities by taking important roles in the National Education Week program. The senior play, *Ghost Wanted*, by Guernsey LePelley was quite a success with Thespians dominating the cast. Throughout the year members participated in radio programs, oratorical contests, the operetta, *The Fortune Teller*, and attended district college plays, also the Broadway production of *Guys and Dolls*. A hearty ovation was given the junior play, *Sixteen in August*. Several new students have been initiated into the troupe and the yearly curtain closed with the presentation of gold stars to Thespians on Award Day and the election of Best Thespians.—Mildred Crinkey, Secretary.

RUPERT, WEST VIRGINIA Troupe 590
The three-act comedy, *Men Are like Street Cars*, climaxed our 1952-53 season. Prior to this, we presented three one-act plays: *School Spirit on Trial*, *The Devil and Miss Appleby*, and a sacred play, *For This Cause*. The last was also given at a special pre-Easter service in a local church.

In addition to this, our troupe also aided the senior class in the production of its annual play, *Annie Get Your Gun*. We participated in a regional drama festival in which we came



Troupe 1074, Visalia, Calif., Sr. High School, Maude M. Prigg, Sponsor.

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out second. We now have 22 members and 100 alumni.—*Jackie Brooks, President.*

—O—
OSKALOOSA, IOWA Troupe 228

We finished a very successful year, probably one of the most successful in the history of the Thespian troupe here at O. H. S. To date we have 75 prospective Thespians working to become full Thespian members and starting our school year in September we will have 15 Thespians. Our plays this year consisted of a melodrama, a three-act play and an evening of four one-acts and a contest play that was given a superior rating at the State Speech Contest. At our Honor Day Assembly on May 18 Arnold Popofsky was voted the Honor Thespian for 1953.—*Roberto Lamb, Secretary.*

—O—
BATAVIA, ILLINOIS Troupe 1265

We had a full and satisfying year for just being organized. Our first and third plays of the year, *The Empress Carlotta* and *Great Day*, were original plays written by our members. We have furnished plays as entertainment for Women's Club, P. T. A., and Elgin Hospital. Other plays produced were *Bird's Christmas Carol*, *The Glorified Brat*, *Even Exchange* and for the senior class play, the grand finale, *The Happiest Years*.—*Debbie Duncan, Secretary.*

—O—
GLEN COVE, NEW YORK Troupe 41

We had one of our most active and profitable seasons. We launched the season with *Jenny Kissed Me*, starring Jock McGreggor, of stage and TV fame. This was the first time in public school history that a professional guest star appeared with a high school cast. The one-act play, *The First Dress Suit*, was presented

for an assembly program. In March we staged the musical comedy, *Best Foot Forward*, complete with a singing and dancing chorus. We rounded out our year of dramatic activity with a trip to New York to see *South Pacific*.—*Richard Trousdell, President.*

—O—
EAST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT Troupe 720

The members of the Masquers, East Hartford High School's dramatic club, after an unsuccessful attempt last year to capture honors in the Connecticut Regional Drama Festival with the drama, *The Intruder*, by Maeterlinck, tried this year with a comedy, *The Proposal*, by Anton Chekhov. The play was warmly received by audiences at both the Regional and State Festivals.

Aside from *The Proposal* the Masquers presented a three-act play in November entitled *Live and Let Live*. The club ended its current year with a trip to New York to see *Wonderful Town* and with a club picnic.—*Carole Tarquinio, Reporter.*

—O—
HENRYETTA, OKLAHOMA Troupe 44

We had a successful and profitable year. We again produced our traditional four plays. In the fall the speech class gave a stirring characterization of *Old Doc* and in January the speech class took its one-act play, *The Confessional*, to our contest. In late winter the junior class gave *Its Pappa Who Pays*. The seniors ended the year by staging their production of *All American Family* in record time.

We have taken in an unusually large number of Thespians this year and are graduating two Honor Thespians.—*Joanne Marianos, Reporter.*

—O—
MT. PLEASANT, TEXAS Troupe 904

Mt. Pleasant Thespian Troupe members took part in many dramatic activities last year. On March 6 the annual night of plays was held. Four one-act plays were presented. The two dramas presented were *The Bishop's Candlesticks* and *Lost Victory*, while *First Dress Suit* and *Antic Spring* represented the comedies. *Antic Spring* was chosen to enter the District Play Contest and won third place. On April 9 and 10 the high school choir presented a romantic comedy operetta in two acts, *Love Goes South*. Principal characters in the operetta were Thespians. Several assembly programs consisted of plays presented by Thespian members. Of special interest was the Hallowe'en play, *The Soft Hearted Ghost*, and the Christmas play, *A Song Is Born*.—*Carolyn Munden, Reporter.*

—O—
KEOKUK, IOWA Troupe 192

We enjoyed one of our most profitable years. Our troupe produced a three-set show, *Aladdin*

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and *His Wonderful Lamp*, with all of the Arabian Nights' splendor and hocus-pocus. In addition to its two evening performances, there was a special matinee for grade school children. Forty-four Thespians and Reserves journeyed to the University of Iowa for a tour of the University Theatre and the new television studios. In the evening they saw a performance of *Anna Christie*.—*Shirley Keim, Reporter.*

—O—
ALTON, ILLINOIS Troupe 126

With the dramatic season drawing to a close in most high schools, we Thespians reviewed our accomplishments in the dramatic field during the past year. First, the successful production of *Family Circle*, last fall; the Christmas pageant; the original one-act play written by a member and the very successful spring production of *Green Valley*.

We also had a fall and spring induction and candy sales to keep us jumping during our spare time. Alton High Thespians are busy Thespians. We closed the season with the senior play, *Divine Flora*.—*Kay Travis, Vice President.*

—O—
ARROYO GRANDE, CALIFORNIA Troupe 1019

The year of 1952-53 has been very busy for Troupe 1019. One project after another came our way and we completed each with a vim which was hard to match.

We began our season with a three-act play, *The Late Christopher Bean*, which everyone enjoyed immensely. The first spring activity was the Thespian "Pop" Dance. As an intermission feature we presented a pantomime melodrama. Our high school gym was decorated as a Paris sidewalk cafe when our troupe presented its annual fashion show, *On the Avenue*. We also produced two one-act plays



New initiates and guests, Troupe 1240, Arsenal Technical High School, Indianapolis, Ind., Gaylord Allen, Sponsor.

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Submerged and *Evening Star*, which were completely student directed. Our last event of the year was our semi-formal initiation and banquet with acting awards being presented to various outstanding members of the troupe.—*Jeanne Evans, Secretary.*

STAPLES, MINNESOTA Troupe 314

Our Thespian club assisted the junior and senior classes in their productions of *We Shook the Family Tree* and *Foot-loose*. The Thespians presented the annual high school Christmas pageant and two one-act plays, *The Old Maid's Club* and *Comin' Round the Mountain*. Proceeds from these plays were used for Thespian membership dues and pins. Our club also presented a radio program entitled *Know Your School* over a local radio station. Twenty-four members were admitted into our Thespian troupe this past year. Our social events included a fall initiation, Christmas party and a spring picnic.—*Shirley Haugen, President.*

VANDERGRIFT, PENNSYLVANIA Troupe 1186

It was a lot of fun to produce *Men Are like Streetcars* as our play this year, and we enjoyed it very much. We tried something new for us, and that was that our president designed the stage setting, selected the color scheme, obtained the furniture and supervised the work. It was really quite beautiful and many people said that it was worth the admission price just to see the stage. We also cooperated with the choir in producing the *Waltz Dream* and supervised the dance routines. We found this an interesting and educational project. — *Toni Mango, Reporter.*

CHARLES TOWN, WEST VIRGINIA Troupe 993

We took great strides in 1952-53 to promote better dramatics in our school. Our troupe started in the fall of '52 with 12 members. We now have added 17 members making a total of 29 active members. The year opened with the presentation of the *Ninth Annual C. H. S. Revue*. Eighteen Thespians took part in major and minor roles, in chorus lines and on the stage crew. December 22nd the Troupe held its third annual alumni Christmas party. Also we entertained at a reception on May 11th our parents and teachers. The junior class play, *Rip Van Winkle*, was the next big production. The cast contained 16 Thespians. In April a group of Thespians traveled to Washington, D. C., to witness a performance of *Oklahoma*. We have been a very busy troupe this year and hope to do even more next year to further dramatics in our community.—*Sandy Specht, Scribe.*

MANISTEE, MICHIGAN Troupe 73

Under the direction of Dora Kulow, each year the drama class of Manistee High School studies some special phase of dramatics. This year our topic was *The History of Drama*. Along with this project, we presented the following one-act assembly plays: *John Speaks for Himself*, *Roughly Speaking*, *Minor Miracle* and *Ladies of the Mop*. Instead of presenting a three-act play for the public, we presented two one-act plays: *The Rivals* and *Cracked Ice*, which were received very well. We had our Thespian initiation on May 14.—*Priscilla Wellman, Secretary.*

DALLAS, TEXAS Troupe 216

We met in September to vote in new members. Discussing plans for the coming year, we decided to give *A Note to Myself* for the Thanksgiving assembly, planned several talent assemblies, and discussed the senior play, which was *Life of the Party*. In the spring semester we gave *When Girls Ask Boys for Dates* and *Summons of Sarel* on Fun Night. *Summons of Sarel* was entered in city competition and placed second. Stockton Briggles was judged best supporting actor and Dolores Walker, best actress. Many Thespians participated in *One Foot in Heaven*, given by the May graduating class.—*Billye Funk, Reporter.*

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RAVENSWOOD, WEST VIRGINIA Troupe 253

We were very active in initiating at Ravenswood high school a Junior Dramatics club to stimulate interest among lower classmen in the fundamentals of drama. We participated in the Second Annual Little Kanawha Drama Festival, which was held at Parkersburg, March 4, by presenting the play, *Suicide*. The characters were: Boy, Frank Noll; Girl, Dee Chambers; Policeman, Gene Morgan. Our troupe also journeyed to Ohio University to see the production of *Finian's Rainbow*. We held our formal initiation on February 12 in which we initiated 15 new members.—Barbara Divers, President.

HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA Troupe 503

Troupe 503 of John Harris High School was constantly in the news since early fall of 1952. We started the ball rolling with the three-act comedy, *Ever Since Eve*. This was followed by a one-act comedy, which showed what would happen if girls asked boys for dates.

We are still patting ourselves on the back for the "excellent" rating our cast was awarded in the State Forensic Play Contests for *Jacob Comes Home*.

Our Troupe is closing their season of activities with two one-act plays, *Opening Night* and *Antic Spring*, and our annual party given for the senior members—Sally Rolston, Co-chairman of Publicity.

SULPHUR, OKLAHOMA Troupe 1198

Down to Earth was our first major production and it proved to be a great success. "Professionally done!" and "Best Sulphur has seen!" were two of the compliments we received following our presentation. *Down to Earth*, directed by our sponsor, Gertrude Donaghe, offered a challenge to both the cast and various committees, but both groups responded efficiently. Although our troupe celebrated its first anniversary March 21 last year, it is rapidly attaining the position of the most distinguished group in our school. We are indeed proud to



Formal initiation banquet, Troupe 357, Robinson, Ill., High School, Ann Mlinarich, Sponsor.

be associated with the National Thespian Society.—June Edwards, Member.

OMAHA, NEBRASKA Troupe 738

In observance of National Theatre Month, we presented *The Hasty Heart*, the comedy-drama by John Patrick, which relates the amusing life of six soldiers, each of different nationality, recuperating in a British Military Hospital in Burma; and of the stubborn Scotchman, who is too proud to accept friendship. Our set, constructed by the manual training instructor, Max Winter, was made of cornstalks, which we call "Nebraska bamboo." The Scotchman's kilt and the uniforms were rented from a New York costumer, and a special sewing committee from the play production class made the eight pairs of pajamas that were needed. The cast, under the expert direction of Doris Stevens, played

to enthusiastic audiences for one matinee and two evening performances.

On May 7 we scheduled our Thespian Tea, at which time we welcomed many new Thespians into our troupe.—Kay Clatterbuck, Reporter.

AMHERST, OHIO Troupe 730

We were a very active troupe during the past year. In November we presented the full-length play, *I Remember Mama*, with great success. Next on the schedule was a series of three radio broadcasts over Station WEOL for National Education Week. Then came the *I Speak for Democracy* contest. Our two winners delivered their speeches over the radio, and our finalist participated in the county contest in which he was also victor, and then in the district contest. Two *Prince of Peace* contests were held with 10 people competing. One was county winner and later spoke in the District Contest in Toledo. During the present semester all speech students have participated in panel discussions on a variety of topics ranging from *Dating to Africa Today*. Two groups appeared before the P. T. A. with the topics *What Youth Wants from Its World* and *Youth's Attitude toward Religion*, the latter in collaboration with the Amherst Ministerial Association. During the remainder of the year we worked on final speeches, readings and one-act plays.—Joyce Myers, Secretary.

FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS Troupe 254

We Thespians of Troupe 254 have proved ourselves as directors, actors and script writers. Our first program to be presented was T. N. T. Night, our annual program consisting of four one-act plays written by members of the Drama Class and directed and acted by the Thespians of our troupe. *No Time for Love*, *The Death of Sidney Carton*, *The Divided Heart* and *The Masquerade* were received by an enthusiastic audience.

A November banquet, at which twelve new members were initiated into Thespians, was followed by the Children's Matinee, *A Christmas Dream*. Our *Miss Brooks* ran successfully for two nights. *Four to Go* was the climax of a very thrilling year. One-act plays were presented by the sophomore, junior and senior classes on a competitive basis, while the fourth, put on by the faculty, was a special attraction.—Constance Baldyga, Scribe.

OTTUMWA, IOWA Troupe 615

We of Troupe 615 feel that we have done much during the school year 1952-53 to further the interest of our community in the dramatic arts by presenting a wide variety of high quality plays. The main attraction of the year was the first children's play our dramatic club has ever presented, *Little Red Ridinghood*. Due to the teamwork of 115 members, we were able to reproduce a story land atmosphere for our young audience. Our ushers were dressed as

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story book characters; the stage crew made three different scenes; the costume crew made our colorful costumes; and the publicity crew worked double time in order to publicize our two performances.

We also presented *The Little Minister*, from the novel by James M. Barrie, and *Girl-Shy*. In the one-act play, *Minor Miracle*, all four members of the cast received superior ratings at a contest sponsored by the University of Iowa.

We are also happy to report that we have three four-star Thespians in our troupe.—Marie Moore, Secretary.

—O—
RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT Troupe 1162
Thespians Troupe 1162 has had a very active and productive year. Early in the fall the Troupe sponsored a square dance, the proceeds of which were used to purchase new equipment. It turned out to be quite a successful venture.

On November 21 the play, *Murder in a Nunnery*, dramatized by Emmet Lavery from the novel by Eric Shepherd, was given by the Troupe. The play required five sets and eleven changes which were built by a Stage Craft group. A ticket selling contest was held which greatly spurred the sales. The group was divided into two teams. The losing team played host at a party for the team selling the most tickets.

One of our Thespian members is going to enter the NEW YORK JOURNAL AMERICAN Tournament of Orators. May 8 and 9 marked the giant musical sponsored by the Music Department and the Thespian Society. The entire school was in on this event.

The annual initiation and dance was held this year on May 22. This ended a very successful year at Ridgefield High School for Thespians Troupe 1162.—Marcia Crow, Scribe.

—O—
RISINGSUN, OHIO Troupe 281
In the fall of 1948 seventeen girls along with their sponsor, Evalena Pletcher, organized "R"

Little Theatre. Since then, membership has increased to forty-three, including eleven boys.

In 1948 the only planned program included the annual junior and senior class plays, and pantomimes and impersonations done exclusively during the club meetings. The program now includes not only the class plays, but a one-act play presented by each class, participation in the One-Act Play Festival at Bowling Green University (we received a rating of Excellent this year), a regular class in Speech, and an annual club three-act production. In 1953 we also joined the Ohio High School Speech League.

In February of 1952 we joined the National Thespian Society with 14 charter members. With 14 members now the Troupe initiated 10 new members the last week of April; and the installation of new officers at the annual banquet was held in May.—Sandra Clark, Vice-President.

—O—
WICHITA, KANSAS Troupe 511
On February 16, 1953, Sacred Heart Academy staged *The Young and Fair*, a three-act

play by N. Richard Nash. The two problems of dividing the stage into three sets and the unusual lighting were met in the following way:

Partitions were made by the stage crew to block off the stage into three different rooms: the bedroom, office and the main hall. They were made of cardboard and painted, and were six inches wide and varied from six inches to one foot high with an irregular outline along the top giving a broken wall effect.

The entire lighting of the play was done by overhead spots and a few footlights. The effect gained by this was one lighted room with the other two in semi-darkness. The troupe sponsor, Osythe Dears Smith Moore, directed the play.—Shirla Cleary, Secretary.

—O—
MARKED TREE, ARKANSAS Troupe 301

The initiation and banquet honoring seventeen new members opened our school year, 1952-53. As members of UNESCO, we presented *The Betrothal of Mai Tsung*. During Drama Week we presented eleven one-act plays. Judges selected *The Medicine Show* and *Bumbo*



Head table with guest speaker at banquet following formal initiation, Troupe 1186, Vandergrift, Pa., High School, Louise M. Wingert, Sponsor.

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the *Clown* winners. Both plays received a Superior rating at Memphis State College Drama Festival. *The Medicine Show* also received an excellent rating at the Arkansas High Schools' Drama Festival in March. Credit for our fine training and for our recognition in our state goes to our able sponsor, Marie Thost Pierce.—*Carol Kay Williams, President.*

—O—
BAY CITY, MICHIGAN

Troupe 143

Shakespeare in high school dramatics? It can be done . . . We did it. Our production of *Macbeth* was the high-light of the year. We made our own costumes, shields, swords, daggers, furniture and shoes. We rented no equipment to do the production. We presented a half hour of it over Michigan State College's station WKAR and filmed fifteen minutes of it for television. It was our first Thespian-sponsored play and it made us proud.

We journeyed to Detroit by bus and saw Helen Hayes in *Mrs. McThing*. We gave *Kind Lady* as our fall play and *My Sister Eileen* as the spring production. During the noon hours we presented eight different one-act plays. A school public relations program in a series of seven was done over our local station WGRO. *Rumplestiltskin* was the first children's play we have ever done and it was well liked.—*Ettalea Beaudon, Secretary.*

—O—
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

Troupe 822

Greetings, fellow Thespians — from Troupe 822! We'd like to brag about our VIP to you. Of the four commencement speakers, three belong to our clan. Patty Van House, Betty Minter and Omer Tittle (who's quite a man). In the music department we have a virtual Caruso,

Don Chastain, who will sing anytime you ask him to do so.

An aspiring Donald O'Connor as everyone knows,

Is Glendyn Alsop our "Mister Tap Toes."

Now lest we forget the most important Thespian of all,

We'll mention Maybelle Conger, our sponsor, who keeps us on the ball!

—*Rae Leta Greenhaw, President.*

—O—
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

Troupe 1153

A delightful innovation by our new sponsor, Hal Riehle, provided a surprise for the audi-

ence when the curtain rose for our presentation of *Our Miss Brooks*. Lacking funds for set construction, Mr. Riehle convinced the cast that a semi-barren, no-set stage would be most fitting for this fine play. With stage and auditorium doors for entrances and exits the production was placed right in the laps of the audience in an attempt to make the audience feel almost like participants rather than viewers. A few minor line alterations assisted in the illusion that the bare stage was a storeroom converted into a classroom. Full houses both nights attested to the success of our first major production in two years.—*Carol Meyer, Acting Secretary.*



Installation of Troupe 774, Monroe, Mich., High School, Richard Lemburg, Sponsor.

I MAKE-UP

(Continued from page 13)

Art of Make-up rose up
like a Champ!
It took a score of years or
more
To really bring it to the fore!
A gentleman, one known as
C. Herbert of Berlin, had
the crown, for inventing
revolutionary Grease Paint,
given to him!

And let's look to the modern creed
and a wise man's words heed:
'Tis important today PERFECT
Make-up to display,
Modern Stage-lighting demands
it so;
Use it wisely and well to
Enhance your show!
Experiment carefully with every
character you draw;
Place him under each gelatin —
Lavender-blue, green or straw!
Each Make-up should be a work
of Art!
Never from that principle
should you depart!
Hear ye! hear ye . . .

• • •

I awakened with a start! Who was
peering into My Map, someone with a
Mask over its eyes! Oh, oh, a perfect dis-
guise! Hum-m— was she, "Masks," mak-
ing-up to me? Aw Gee! . . . Could be!
I glanced past her pert little nose! Now,
why had I gone off and dozed? I should
have kept on guard and watched my P's
and Cues and not let a Muffy-Fluff, Big
Rough Me, Confuse!

So my attention I now nonchalantly
gave to the demonstration at hand. Gra-
cious, had I slept thru many steps, my
land!

I'd missed the trial of the bases for
the proper tone, and the liquid whitener
that was thru the long hair combed to
give age to the character lady.

She had cleverly used a downward
stroke in applying her base and that's
no joke! She put in and around her ears
and on her neck and into the roots of her
hair, without any fears!

She used the same blend on her hands
and applied all the highlights and wrin-
kles too by using a paint brush No. 2!
Then used a heap of nice white powder
and brushed off the surplus — my, how
keen, it's firm and dry without any sheen!
She sure looked keen!

• • •

My Master's friend, John, was using a
Max Factor's Booklet No. 7 and experi-
menting with Shylock (a part pretty
hard, but it's been rumored next fall we'll
do *The Merchant* by the Bard, and
there's nothing like being practical even
in the World of Art).

John had purchased a special Max
Factor Male kit at \$2.00 even and had
put some money in the Kitty to use Tri-
tex, crepe hair and other odds and ends

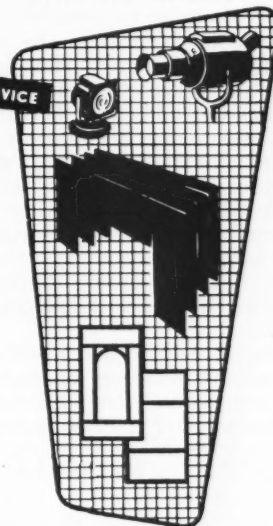


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out of the Thespian book — a stub of a
dermatograph pencil and powder. Book-
let No. 3 had given specific "info" on
crepe hair and nose putty and our stud-
ious friend was ready to start. He's read
the play over and over, had read all he
could find on the character in mind, so
he started first with the nose. After hav-
ing carefully studied the contour of his
face, he painstakingly went to work:
grease paint No. 5½ base over putty;
put on the dark-red mixed-with-grey wig
and with the dark brown pencil he
blended the wrinkles and age lines into
the base; heavily shadowed with No. 2
lining color, the eyelids; highlighted the
cheek bones, nose and bulging parts of
the forehead with No. 12 lining color,
powdered with No. 7R face powder,
leaving the make-up smooth and dry;
then applied tri-tex to areas of the face
where the grey artificial eyebrows, beard
and mustache were to be applied (no
base had been put on those areas);
placed a cloak around his shoulders and
a skull cap on his head and no! — an
hour and the beginning of a Man!

Say, I wouldn't mind being in the
Theatrical Make-up Business as so many
amateur groups, as well as professional
ones, use grease paint foundation, satin
smooth pancromatic foundation, straight
pancake make-up, liquid make-up, a
variety of face powders, lining colors,
moist and dry rouges, lipsticks, brillian-
tine, eyebrow pencils, eyelash make-up,
masques, tooth enamel, cosmetic, hair
whitener, clown white, paper liners, gold
powders, Hare's feet, Latex, Minstrel
black, Toupee tape, and lots of other
things, I guess — Just no excuse for any-
one's not knowing how to use anything
these days!

Ho hum, Betty Belle's been doing a
straight juvenile female make-up. It
didn't take her so long — Look, she's
experimenting — Took off a complete
make-up using just *one* Kleenex — See
how cute she kept folding it! I feel sorry
for Donna's Mother's pillow case with all
that hair whitener getting on it! Oh well,
guess she'll wash her hair good — girls
put up their hair every nite anyway! So
much for Art!

Looks like everyone's cleaning up. My
Master was working on an Abe Lincoln
make-up — Abe's his hero! You know
My Master kinda looks like Abe.

Kinda acts like him too. He's nice,
My Friend, My Pal!

• • •

Only the small amber pilot light was
left to make queer shadows backstage.
Outside the skimmed-milk, white Janu-
ary moon was cold-shouldering a pin-
point star, and the high, thin wind had
settled to ground level and was sending
sabre-like bits of ground-glass snow into
swirls, and great drifts were forming like
whipped up seven-minute frosting 'round
fence post and pine trees alike.

My Master's father, fearful of an im-
pending blizzard, had hitched up the
dapple-greys to the sleigh and awaited
the merry group of young, happy-hearted
Make-up artists and as many as could
hopped aboard and we headed for Bet-
ty's and hot chocolate and maple sugar
pop-corn balls.

Not to be left out, I "made-up" too

Yes, dog my cats!
I sat
Next to "Masks" • • •
But mind you, only to
keep her warm!

ARENA STAGING

(Continued from page 11)

The use of firearms in the arena is questionable. Certainly the firing of them is apt to cause an undesired reaction from the audience. Perhaps it is best to employ the Greek theatre custom of having all killings take place offstage.

Because of the fact that smoke can be quite distracting in the arena, smoking should be held to the minimum. All ash trays should contain wet sand to prevent cigarettes from continuing to burn after they have supposedly been put out.

Finally, as with scenery, most careful attention must be given to detail in the use of properties. You no longer may place that wobbly, scratched table in the upstage corner or back of the divan. Likewise, you may need to cover bright, new upholstered furniture with black netting in order to reduce light reflection. The silver service will also need to be treated to reduce reflection.

Movement of scenery and properties. It is the custom to change scenery and furniture in view of the audience. The technicians assigned to this task should be neat in appearance, well rehearsed and efficient. Unnecessary trips should be avoided. Changes should be made quietly, smoothly and easily.

Sound

The need for a record player and amplifier is almost as essential to the



Initiation time, Troupe 252, Dunbar, W. Va., High School, Ruby F. Bright, Sponsor.

arena production as to a radio show. Musical recordings are used not only to set the mood before the beginning of each act, but also to cover blackouts. In fact the lights and sound take the place of the curtain for the arena stage.

Ideally, we would like to have two multiple speed turntables, a high fidelity amplifier, at least one microphone and two speakers located above the acting area. But even a single record player with a good amplifier will contribute immeasurably to your production. However, as you will be using the record player for various sound effects in addition to music, it is preferable to have the speakers located nearer the acting area. Because lights and sound are so closely related, it is important to have the sound control located near the switchboard.

For sound effects, such as wind, rain, animal calls, bird songs — among others, recordings are the best choice in the arena. Door slams should come from offstage where the actual doors to the theatre may be closed for the necessary effect. Doorbells should ring from offstage on the side where the door is supposed to be located. Telephones should be wired to ring from the location of the phone. Record players used on the set are best operated by the actors rather than cued in from offstage.

The problem of the *location* of furniture and other set pieces will be covered in a later discussion. Next month we will consider the problems of *make-up* and *costuming* for the arena stage.

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The play revolves around the excitement created by "Home-Coming Week" which culminates with the "Big Game". Everyone is agog with anticipation, for among the returning alumnee will be Spud Baxter, now a Hollywood favorite. The play deals with an awkward, gawky fellow, Ronney Rooney. Ronney is employed at the Bowl for part-time work and is constantly being reprimanded by Maud, the proprietress, for his continual tardiness and general unreliability. Because the glamorous Sheila spurns blonde men, Ronney dyes his hair brunette in hope of having her notice him and is cast aside when a downpour during the game washes out the dye. Generally speaking, Ronney is continuously in the dog-house until he chances to find the missing

and much-sought-for Mary Lou. The cast, besides Ronney, includes such typical collegiate characters as Sheila, the campus belle; the football heroes; the fluttery head of the reception committee, Mary Lou, whose chagrin is so great when she learns she has been late for the arrival of Spud that she disappears, leaving a mournful farewell note which throws the entire campus into an uproar and precipitates a furious rescue hunt; Maud, proprietress of the Campus Bowl; Clip, who runs the Bowl for her; Spud Baxter, an Alumnus and college boys and girls. Exciting and interesting roles for your cast, and a very enjoyable evening for your audience. The comedy is often uproarious, though at times the situation is almost serious. This is a wholesome, worthwhile comedy.

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SWITZERLAND

(Continued from page 10)

aged, it does not flourish and so the theatre is thrust back again onto foreign material. It is a vicious circle.

The approach to school drama is far from academic. There is so much live theatre that a fresh and workmanlike treatment of a production is always expected. At the same time it is remembered that youth are amateurs and that amateurs play for the love of the theatre and for their own enjoyment. *They are not professionals, cannot compete with professionals and are therefore discouraged from doing so.* It is thought that any attempt to do so leads to the amateurs copying the faults and inessentials of professional production without gaining the technical excellence upon which the professional artist relies. But this realisation of the dangers of amateurs' taking the worst from the professions has not led to the revulsion which we noted in Germany, nor to the suspicious attitude towards the formal presentation of plays, which we sometimes find in England. It has, on the contrary, caused them to throw themselves wholeheartedly and sincerely into the presentation of plays to the best possible standard that they can achieve, bearing in mind the limitations of the actors. Aware of the dangers of adopting "tricky" methods or of capturing the outward form of the play without grasping its inner con-

tent, they endeavour to put a play upon the stage with a fundamental sincerity in all their acting.

This enthusiasm is by no means confined to acting, for whenever it is possible, the students do their own decor, making and painting whatever scenery is required and doing all the work in preparing and making the costumes. There is a workshop attitude to the school production, a workshop where each can play his part and where the resultant presentation is something to be admired and designed to give pleasure to all.

A vital influence in the life of a pupil living in one of the larger centres is the "Jugendtheatregemeinde," the Youth Theatre Guild. Theatres are subsidised by the state, that is to say, by the Government of the canton; and teachers and representatives of the education department are on the board of management of the theatre. Each pupil pays two francs a year membership subscription for which he receives special rates at the theatre obtaining seats for from 1 to 3 francs, which is about half the normal price. There are also special performances given for young people who are also permitted to attend dress rehearsals at a slight charge. There is a great demand for seats at the theatre and young people are becoming inveterate theatre-goers. This organisation now extends over the whole of Switzerland — for example, if a pupil from Basle goes to

Lucerne or Geneva and presents his membership card at the theatre box office, he can obtain all the facilities of membership.

There are many Youth Clubs in Switzerland all doing drama: Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, various church and social clubs most of whom have their dramatic groups. On the whole there is not so much expected of their performances as of school drama, a circumstance which is common in most countries. The key seems to lie in the dramatic knowledge and standard of the club leader and what he demands from the members of his group.

There is a great deal of amateur theatre with plenty of opportunity for the young person to keep up his interest in drama as a performer or spectator after he has left the shelter of school or club.

Competitions are not known in amateur, youth or school drama as they are in England, but this does not stop comparison and criticism. When each group in a class is doing a play or when each class is engaged on its own play and presenting it to the school, then one can be quite sure that there are candid comments and an adjudged unspoken "best." The pupils are as properly proud and excited about their work as they should be — a healthy condition which shows that their interest and enjoyment are fully alive.

BRIEF VIEWS

By WILLARD FRIEDERICH



For the Playreading Committee

THE HAPPIEST DAYS OF YOUR LIFE by John Dighton. A three-act farce; Samuel French. Royalty: \$25.00. 7M, 6W (2 are students; the rest, character roles). Setting: The Masters' Common Room, Hilary School.

This is an interesting little farce that retains a fairly reasonable degree of sanity most of the time, although even its boisterous moments have an English flavor that is somewhat different from our own farces. The conflict revolves around the difficulties encountered by the Hilary School for Boys when the war-time government billets another school in its quarters. The fact that this school turns out to be St. Swithins School for Girls, with an all-female staff, creates even more consternation; for both staffs include two kinds of people — those who relish mixed company and those who do not. Visiting parents, who object to influences of the opposite sex on their children, must be kept apart and, at the same time, appeased; thus, all kinds of preposterous "relationships" are contrived to explain the presence of the opposite gender. A united front is achieved only at the end when a third school arrives for temporary billeting, and the two schools in possession frantically bar the doors to keep the intruders out.

Americans will probably find it advisable to change a few of the English terms, such as treacle and form, to more easily understood American ones. Confusion may also result from frequent technical references to cricket and net ball. If a cast can be taught not to overdo the broad strokes of character that are frequently present, a delightful evening should be in store for all.

THE BOY WHO COULD SEE by Hal O. Kesler. A three-act farce; Samuel French. Royalty: \$10.00. 7M, 10W (1M and 6W are small roles; and additional extras could be used if desired). Setting: a living room.

For groups looking for a comedy that has a point to it as well as entertainment value, this play may be an answer. Zachary Bartlett, a high-school boy exploited by his somewhat older idol, newspaper-writer Larry Evans, zooms to front-page popularity as a boy who can forecast the future. In the beginning Zach finds the notoriety stimulating; but when the international press and radio move in on him and his old friends begin to retreat in awe and even fear of a "freak," he changes his mind and renounces his title. He discovers that fame and fortune are not worth the necessary price of being a shyster.

If some schools find the radio equipment needed for the national network show a bit troublesome, the author provides suggestions for handling this problem. All production problems should be at a minimum.

SING CHRISTMAS by Margaret Douglas Chamberlin. A one-act pageant-like play; Walter Baker. Royalty: None. 16M, 6W, 3 children (fewer can be used by doubling some of the brief parts, or more can easily be added for an all-school Christmas program). Setting: the bare apron of the stage plus four scenes behind the curtain, which may be as elaborate or as simple as desired.

Mr. Darby, an old piano tuner, encounters the school quartet listlessly rehearsing their Christmas music. He fires their imagination and enthusiasm for the old carols by telling (the audience sees them acted out on the stage) the stories of St. Francis of Assisi, the preservation by daring seventeenth-century carolers of Christmas songs forbidden by the government,

and the birth of *Silent Night* in the village of Aberndorf, Austria. Both the quartet and the cast as a whole (the glee club could be worked in in several spots) must sing, and any number of songs could be used.

One must protest, however, the uncalled-for death of Mr. Darby at the end, for it has nothing to do with the story and serves no purpose other than adding a tear-jerking ending and distracting the audience away from the story of the music. It could easily be eliminated, and the ending could be turned into a general sing with audience participation.

For the Teacher of Courses in Dramatics —

A DRAMATIC LITERATURE AND ARTS COURSE FOR THE SMALLER SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF OREGON by Hugh G. Simpson. Curriculum Bulletin No. 101, edited by Hugh B. Wood, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon; Jan. 25, 1952.

This is a first attempt of the Oregon school system to prepare hints and a suggested syllabus for the organization and teaching of a high-school dramatics course. It is designed with the thought that equipment and facilities may be good, bad, or just plain nil. Most of the space, however, is given to discussions of such items as the present status and the values of dramatics courses in high schools. The syllabus itself is rather brief, though excellent in outline.

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It includes six weeks of pantomime, three of voice and diction, and nine of interpretation and acting; the second semester is given over to study of the history and development of the theater. No bibliographies and few specific assignments are listed. Because of its soundness of approach and plan, however, almost any teacher will profit from reading it, especially the beginning teacher or the one not particularly trained in dramatics.

DRAMATIC ARTS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL by Mabel M. Ellefson. Curriculum Bulletin, No. 115, edited by Hugh B. Wood, University of Oregon; Oct. 5, 1952.

This bulletin of 56 pages is undoubtedly one of the finest publications to date in the field of the high-school dramatics course. The sponsor will be proud to know that Mrs. Ellefson is a sponsor of Troupe 786 at Springfield, Oregon.

Most of the pamphlet is devoted to highly detailed syllabi for units of study in The Play, The Actor, The Director, The Technician, History of the Theatre and Dramatic Literature, Radio, Motion Pictures, and Television. These syllabi are logically and imaginatively set up according to purposes, suggested topics for investigation, suggested activities (which are superb in their interest and teaching values), and carefully selected, up-to-date references. In only one case will a minor objection stand: the references on the motion picture unit are somewhat out-of-date and not as useful as later ones might be. In every other respect this bulletin is the result of meticulous and intelligent study of the field of dramatics and allied arts as applied to the teen-ager.

One of the values of the work is the flexibility with which the units might be taught, for they could be shortened or lengthened as circumstances demand; anything from a six weeks unit to a two-year course could easily be produced by intelligent selection and planning. No dramatics teacher should be without it, and the nominal price of 75c should make it available to all.

EASY PROGRAMS FOR CHURCH HOLIDAYS by Karin S. Asbrand. Walter Baker, 1953.

This collection of playlets and poems is largely directed at grade-school youngsters, although some might prove effective in junior high school. Some might also be used on interpretative reading programs, for such holidays as Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Mother's, Father's, and Children's Day.

TEEN THEATRE by Edwin and Nathalie Gross. Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill, 1953; 245 pp.

The well-trained dramatics teacher will probably find this book far too brief and elementary for his purposes; but the English teacher who has to take over a play or the club with no experience that wishes to do a show should find the simple, concise approach an asset, for no "wading" is necessary to discover the most basic rules of play production. In 65 pages, the authors supply the ground-work for approaching problems of organization, directing, acting, scenery, properties, costumes, make-up, lighting, publicity and business. Their point of view is modern and quite in line with up-to-date theatre practice, as well as practical for the beginner. Though lack of illustrations and oversimplification of innately complex production problems may confuse or irritate some, others will find it a relief not to be overwhelmed with everything at once.

Undoubtedly the best part of the book is the collection of six one-acts, all by the authors and offered royalty-free to any amateur group. The notes on production should be most helpful. The plays themselves are quite simple, some with large, some with small casts. Several would perhaps be more accurately defined as skits; for they are short on plot and long on use of available specialty acts. All leading characters are typical high-school youngsters, and themes are entirely concerned with teen-age problems, such as dating and social acceptance by the group.